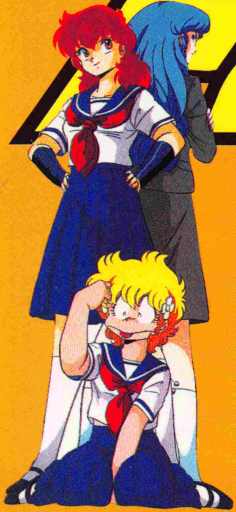


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OTAKU VOCABULARY

You'll find some Japanese terms crop up again and again. Here are a few definitions:

ANIME	Japanese animation
CHARA	Character
KAWAII	Cute
MANGA	Japanese Comics
MECHA	Mechanical object, ie robot, vehicle, weapon, etc.
OTAKU	Anime fanboy/girl
OVA/OAV	Original Video Animation, anime made for video
SEIYUU	Anime voice actor

KONNICHIWA!

"I think that if children have seen one or two real cartoon films in their lives, that's all it needs. If they remember them from time to time, and feel that they've seen something really special, out of all the wonders of the world, then that's fine." - Hayao Miyazaki, speaking on TELETOONS, ITV, 1992.

I recently had the privilege of introducing a showing of the full-length 'director's cut' of Hayao Miyazaki's KAZE NO TANI NO NAUSICAA (Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind) to an appreciative audience at London's ICA cinema. The showing was arranged as part of the BUILDING BRIDGES film festival, which in turn was part of a week of lectures, discussions and workshops commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, dedicated to the premise that we should all work to ensure there are 'No More Hiroshimas'. NAUSICAA is obviously an ideal film for such an event, showing as it does both the destructive nature of man and the ability of individuals to transcend that stupidity and change their world.

The print was specially subtitled in Japan by Studio Ghibli and Tokuma Shoten, and the subtitles (finished, I was told, just four days before the showing) gave me a whole new insight on a film I have always loved, but never previously seen in a properly subtitled version. The quality of the print itself was superb; the wonderful backgrounds and the perfectly crafted details of Miyazaki's worldmaking sprang to life in vibrant detail, and Jo Hisaishi's ravishing score heightened the emotional impact almost unbearably. Everyone in the cinema felt they had shared a very special and remarkable experience.

It saddens me that this experience isn't available to the majority of cinemagoers in the UK. Video is a wonderful medium, but the full impact of the works of a master of cinema can only be felt on the big screen, from a top-quality film print, with a sound system capable of doing justice to the vocal performances, soundtrack and music. Yet I've never been able to take my friends, my godchildren, my niece and nephews to see a Miyazaki film in its proper format. Despite the wonderfully affirmative nature of Miyazaki's work and its unsurpassed technical and artistic quality, despite the lack of positive programming for children - in particular for young girls - the British cinema still ignores this treasure-trove of world-class films.

I thank Miyazaki-sensei, Studio Ghibli, Tokuma Shoten and the organisers of the BUILDING BRIDGES festival for giving me the opportunity to see one of the world's great films as it should be seen and as its director intended. And I urge everyone working in cinema programming in Britain to consider screening his works in their theatres.

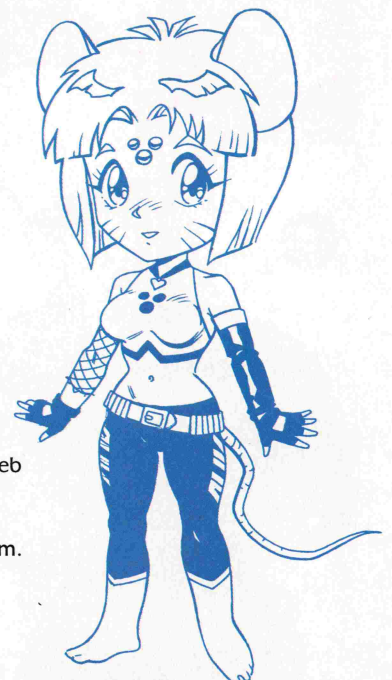
Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy
Editor

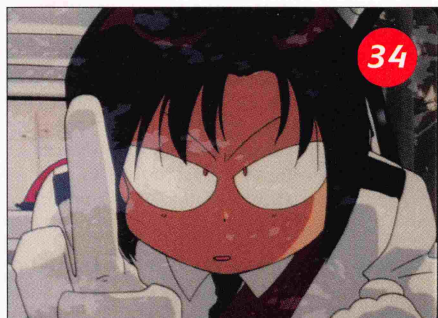
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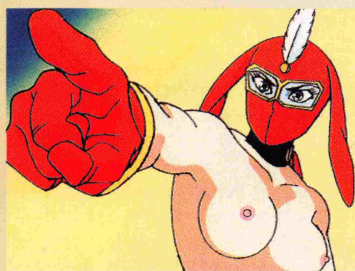
66 **ANIME EATS** - who's cooking today?

newscan

EUROPE

KEKKO KAMEN VS THE BBFC

The British Board of Film Certification came within an ace of refusing a certificate to KEKKO KAMEN. This would effectively have banned the erotic parody OAV from sale in Britain. The reason? It wasn't the nunchakus, though BBFC head James Ferman has a wellknown aversion to these particular weapons, holding Hong Kong movies responsible for introducing



them and thus increasing violence on the streets of Britain. The Board felt that the prospective buyers of the video might be turned on by the scenes of sexual torture and violence therein. Since KEKKO KAMEN is obviously both a cartoon and a sendup, the phrase 'get a life' might spring to mind; however the Board was finally persuaded that refusing a certificate would be using a sledgehammer to crack a marshmallow, and EAST2WEST were able to release Go Nagai's comic masterpiece with only minor cuts totalling about two minutes.

BABEL II gets UK and US release



NEXT FROM EAST2WEST

Chris Smith recently announced that the followup to KEKKO KAMEN and EIGHT MAN AFTER will be the less underdressed but equally action-packed BABEL II, a four-part OAV series about a schoolboy with latent psychic powers. STREAMLINE PICTURES have just released BABEL II through Orion in the USA, so for a sneak preview turn to our VIDEOSCAN pages this issue! And clips are featured on the East2West Web site on <http://www.hardnet.co.uk/e2w>

BIG NEWS IN THE WIND AT WESTERN CONNECTION

As we go to Press the UK subtitled label has not yet made any announcement about its autumn release schedules. However a number of very exciting titles are being mooted, continuing the label's reputation for offering fans something different. More news soon.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANIMELAND!

AUK's European Language Fanzine of the Year 1994 is four years old, and to celebrate there's a superb double issue, numbered 18/19, 130 pages of fabulous anime information and pictures. Even if you don't read French, the pictures are so beautiful and the whole magazine so well designed that it's worth buying for its visual charm alone. For details on how to get a copy send an IRC to AnimeLand-Animarte, 15 rue de Phalsbourg, 75017 Paris, France.

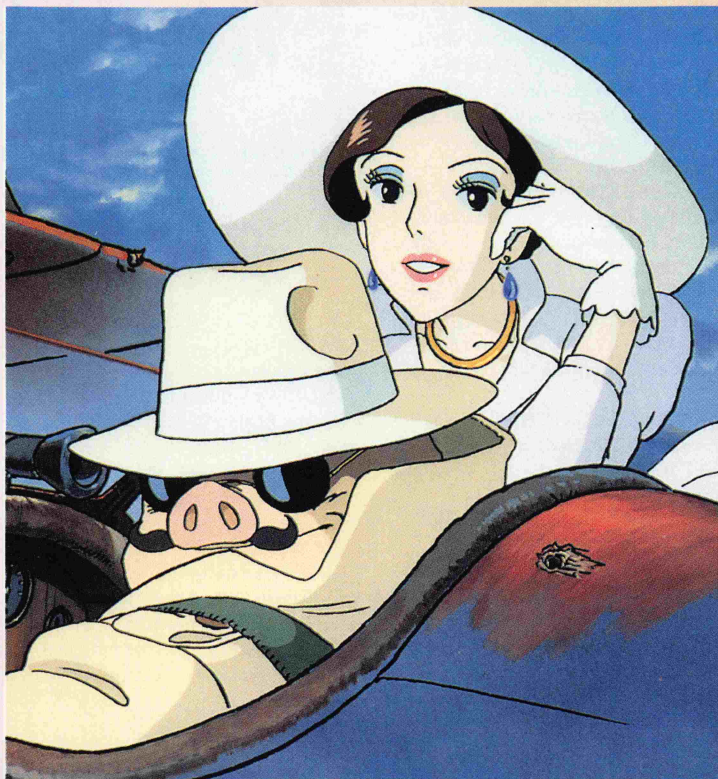
STREET FIGHTER II THE ANIMATED MOVIE - NEW SOUNDTRACK FOR WESTERN RELEASE

Manga Entertainment and Sony Music U.S. have announced that the October 2nd release of the animated STREET FIGHTER II movie in the Western market will feature a new soundtrack, produced by Sony Music U.S. and replacing the Japanese soundtrack. Another change is that the character names for the Western version of the film will be changed to reflect the different character names for the Western version of the game; so Balrog will be Vega, M. Bison Balrog, and so on. Sony will release the film in the US while Manga distribute it in Europe, Australasia and South Africa. A 15 certificate is expected but has yet to be confirmed by the BBFC.



French video release for Tezuka's BLACK JACK

MACROSS and FIST OF THE NORTH STAR will be the first titles on the new label. On its own label AK



PORCO ROSSO hits French Cinema

SUMMER VIEWING : FRANCE

Television channel TF1 is showing DRAGON QUEST under the title FLY, and you can also see DRAGON BALL Z - unedited episodes on Wednesdays, with two episodes edited together on every other weekday. PORCO ROSSO finally made it onto French cinema screens on 21st June. On the video front, a new label, MANGA POWER, has been formed as a joint venture by TF1 Video, AK video and AB Production. Re-releases of the first three SAINT SEIYA movies,

Video will bring out all 31 episodes of the COBRA TV series on 10 tapes; since the series was removed from French TV after only 3 episodes had been shown, on the grounds that it was too violent, this will be welcomed by French fans. TAIHO SHICHAUZO and the new BLACK JACK OAVs will also be released on AKV. French subtitled label KAZE ANIMATION is following AnimEigo's example and entering the dubbing market with KOJIRO, a French language dub of FUUMA NO KOJIRO, based on the manga by Masami Kurumada. And on the big screen, Kaze Animation is running an anime film season, CYCLE CINEMANGA, in Paris' first megamultiplex at Les Halles from 19 July,

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showing ARION, GALAXY EXPRESS 999, LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES, RANMA 1/2, GREY, FUTURE BOY CONAN and MACROSS - DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?

SUMMER VIEWING : UK

The Manga cinema festival has ended but Channel 4 are spreading the word wider with latenight screenings of Manga Video titles every Saturday at midnight for twelve weeks. The first title, TOKYO BABYLON 1, was screened on 22nd July. Following titles include CYBER CITY OEDO 808 and DOOMED MEGALOPOLIS.

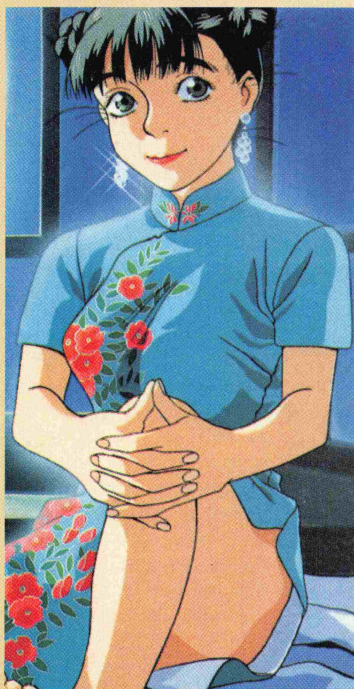
SUMMER FUN : SPAIN

Spanish TV stations have bowed to parental pressure and ceased to show DRAGONBALL and RANMA 1/2. However there's still plenty of anime being shown, most of it re-screenings of titles already seen; the one true novelty is action-adventure series YAIBA.

Subscription channel Canal + Spain is planning a weekly series, MANGA HOUR, screening titles such as RECORD OF LODOSS WAR and THE GUYVER. On the video front, Pioneer LDCA have launched into the Spanish market. As for manga, RIOT by Satoshi Shiki and DARK ANGEL by Kia Asamiya are the latest additions to a healthy translated manga scene.

EUROPEAN CONVENTIONS - SEE FANSCENE ROUNDUP FOR DETAILS!

SPRIT OF WONDER coming from ANIMEIGO and DARK HORSE.



DRAGONBALL Z: Manga ends, but not the spinoffs. This is Bandai's art for the new Super Famicom game

USA

SPRIT OF WONDER FROM ANIMEIGO

The fan-favourite anime label has recently announced its acquisition of the magical OAV THE SPIRIT OF WONDER - MISS CHINA'S RING from Toshiba EMI. The 45-minute OAV will be released in dubbed and subtitled formats on video and LD, and the manga on which it is based will be translated by Studio Proteus and released by Dark Horse. Set in the late 19th century in a seaside town, this is a story of mad science, secret love and true romance

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MANGAZINE!

The West's first regular professional publication inspired by manga and anime is ten years old this year. Ben Dunn's MANGAZINE, foundation stone of the popular Antarctic Press American manga imprint, has developed from its origins as an outlet for American artists' manga-inspired strips, to a manga zine with anime articles; now the manga are moving out to a new title while MANGAZINE devotes itself solely to anime and manga information. One of the hardest anime publications to track down in Europe, MANGAZINE is worth the effort - if your local specialist shop can't get a copy for you, try mail order via Sheffield Space Centre or Forbidden Planet London.

JAILED CONTROVERSY RAGES

The hottest topic at the California conventions this summer was the formation and possible operations of JAILED, the organisation set up by the American anime industry to fight piracy and bootlegging. Many longtime American fans fear that JAILED will unite against them to stamp out activities like fan translation and subtitling, or even fan artwork at convention art shows. The organisation has been at pains to stress that its target is piracy, not fan activity, but fears persist. Read some of the opposing views in our SOAPBOX feature on page.

US CONVENTIONS - SEE FANSCENE ROUNDUP FOR DETAILS!

JAPAN

DRAGONBALL Z - THE END!

Volume 42 of the hugely successful manga, out in July, was the last. Creator Akira Toriyama is known to have wanted to bring the saga to an end for some time, and has finally done so. The TV series will also now draw to a close. So how did it all finish? Well, Goku finally defeated Buu, and Gohan married Videl and had a son called Pan. Some years later, at a new martial arts tournament, a mysterious fighter called Uub turns up - the reincarnation of Buu. But since he's still only

a kid, there's a chance that Goku can teach him the right way to use his strength so that he'll only fight for fun ... look out for volume 42 to get all the details. And what will Toriyama do next? His games design work has been very successful, but surely the creator of DRAGONBALL and DR. SLUMP, two of the funniest and most successful manga and anime series ever, won't stay out of the universe-making game for long!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NEWTYPE!

1995 is the tenth anniversary year of Kadokawa's flagship anime zine. This spring saw a street party in the Ginza with celebratory events and screenings, and the magazine features anniversary special articles throughout the year. Anime fans who don't live in Japan will find NEWTYPE in good Japanese bookshops in their own country. And you can read Ake Sasaki's interview with the editor of NEWTYPE in a forthcoming issue.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANIMAGE!

An even more venerable anime institution, ANIMAGE magazine published its 200th issue early this year, marking its 17th year of publication. ANIMAGE has originated many projects of major importance during its lifetime - the original manga incarnations of KAZE NO TANI NO NAUSICAA (Nausicaa of the Valley of Winds) and THE FIVE STAR STORIES, to name but two. Available from good Japanese bookshops throughout Europe and the Americas.

ON TV - FUSHIGI YUUGI

Based on Shogakukan's popular manga, 'The Secret Game' is currently the hottest series on Japanese TV. Chara designs by Hideyuki Motohashi (of ZENKI and BURN UP fame) and production by



newscan

Studio Pierrot ensure a supremely attractive package for the story of a young girl pulled into a mysterious and dangerous world as she browses through a wierd book in a bookshop.

ON TV - JURA TRIPPER

Ashi Production's latest TV series exploits the enduring popularity of dinosaurs and 'lost world' stories by taking its group of fifteen kids into a secret valley where prehistoric creatures still live. The young team is determined to keep this miraculous little world safe from modern exploitation (maybe they've already seen JURASSIC PARK ...) Kunihiko Yuyama (SLOW STEP, USHIO & TORA) directs, and the screenplay is by veteran Yasushi Hirano, whose wide range of work includes urban adventure CITY HUNTER, martial arts comedy DRAGONBALL and football soap CAPTAIN TSUBASA.

NEW MOVIES

Biggest news is, of course, that the thirteenth DRAGONBALL movie, set to premiere at the Toei Anime Fair this summer, will be the last. It will be supported by a new SLAM DUNK movie and the first based on hit series NINKU.

Kadokawa return to fantasy film production with heroic fantasy SLAYERS, taking broadsword babes Rina and Aku from the TV to the cinema screen this summer on a double bill with LEGEND OF CHRISTANIA, the story of a band of six adventurers in search of a land of peace in a world torn by war, based on a novel by LODOSS WAR creator Ryo Mizuno.

The latest offering from Studio Ghibli has Hayao Miyazaki in the role of producer, writer and storyboard designer, but the direction has been left to Yoshifumi Kondo, formerly chara designer on HOTARU NO HAKA (TOMBSTONE FOR FIRE-

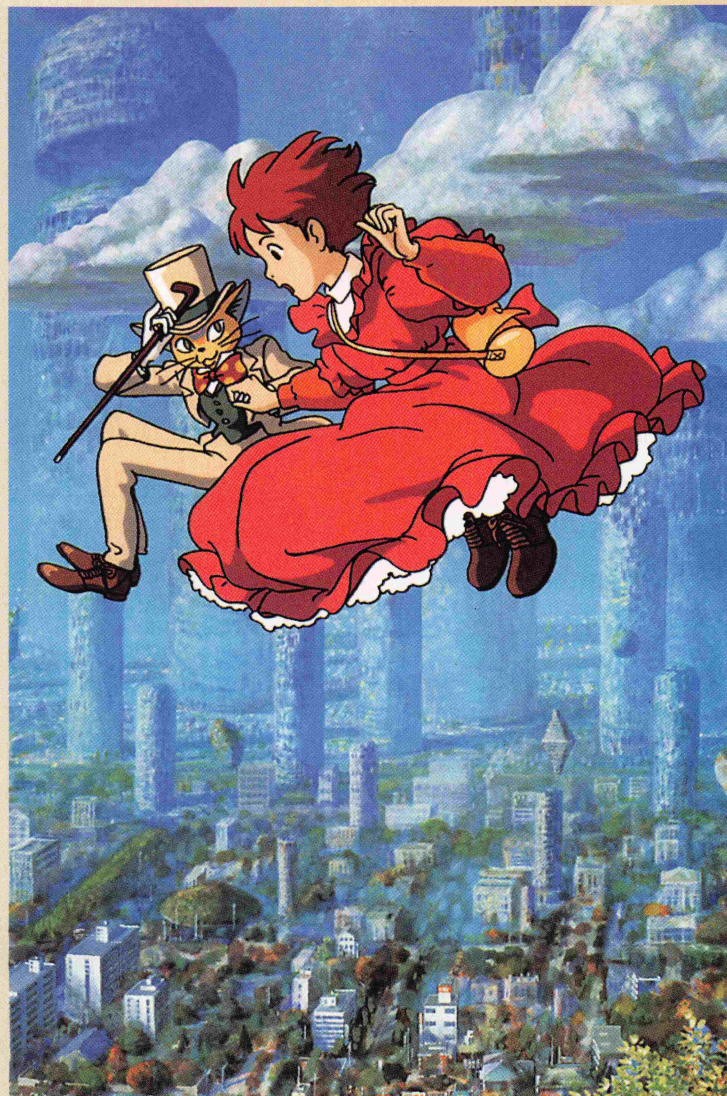
FLIES) and OMOIDE POROPORO (ONLY YESTERDAY). MIMI O SUMASEBA (IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY) tells the story of a lonely young girl whose longings take her on magical journeys between dream and reality, and is based on a manga appearing in Shueisha's popular girls' comic MARGARET.

The real world is reflected in a film beautifully timed to coincide with this summer's memories of World War II, Araki Toei Animation's ANNE FRANCK. Based on the diaries of the tragic young German Jewess who died in a concentration camp, the film is directed by Akinori Nagaoka. This isn't the first anime version of Anne Frank's diaries; Nippon Animation produced a TV special in 1979.

A new COBRA movie is in postproduction; like GHOST IN THE SHELL it has been partly funded by Manga Entertainment Limited.

OAVs

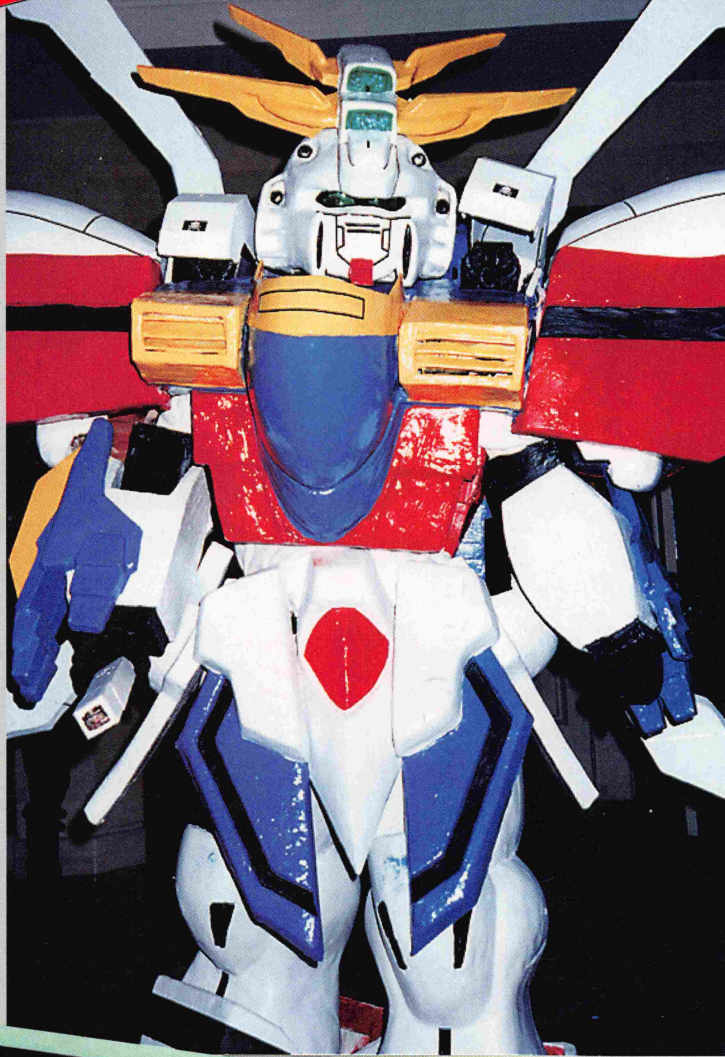
RUIN EXPLORER FAM & IRIE is based on characters created for RPG MAGAZINE, directed by Takeshi Mori (OTAKU NO VIDEO) and written by Kunihiko Yuyama (KEY THE METAL IDOL). The elf Fam and her human friend are searching for a great treasure, and meet a traveller in an inn who claims to know the location of its hiding-place, a castle deep in the desert. There will be four 30 minute episodes in total, of which two are now available. DIRTY PAIR FLASH 2 brings more adventures of the juvenile Kei and Yuri in five 30 minute OAVs - the first one set on a theme park planet whose theme is that wild and wacky era, the twentieth century. ARSLAN SENKI (Heroic Legend of Arislan) 5 is out this month, with part 6 due in October, and eight more 30 minute IRRESPONSIBLE CAPTAIN TYLER OAVs will start appearing in September.



Above: RUIN EXPLORER FAM & IRIE Top right: LEGEND OF CHRISTANIA
Bottom right: MIMI O SUMASEBA (IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY)



**ANIME
EXPO**
JUNE 30th - JULY 2nd
Los Angeles
California



Above: Rudy Hernandez in his stunning G WING

AMERICA FOR BE

The California anime conventions attract fans from all over the USA as well as a number of international attendees, guests from all sections of the anime and manga industry and many companies involved in supplying anime and manga to the growing Western market. Helen McCarthy and Steve Kyte were guests at ANIME EXPO and ANIME AMERICA.

GUESTS OF HONOUR

Most of us dream about meeting one of our favourite anime creators. At these conventions you could meet a whole clutch of them on your way to the bar. ANIME EXPO's guests of honour included the legendary Noboru Ishiguro, director and creator of many anime classics, and the elusive Haruhiko Mikimoto, who has been prevented by pressure of work from attending in both the previous two years. (Look out for our interviews with Mr. Mikimoto and Mr. Ishiguro next issue!) Other Japanese guests of honour were chara designer and creator Satoshi Urushibara, director Kinji Yoshimoto, mecha designer Koichi Ohata, illustrator Noboyuki Onishi (who created the haunting artwork for the credits of WINGS OF HONNEAMISE), producer Kazuhiko Ikeguchi, who has worked on a huge range of anime from BIRTH in 1984 to FAM & IRIE this year, and writer Ryoei Tsukimura, who wrote the scripts for TENCHI MUYO! and created Pioneer's new work EL HAZARD, premiered at the convention. Gaijin guests of honour were Scott Frazier, the first American to make a successful career in the anime industry, Allen Hastings, who created the computer animation packages used on BABY-

LON 5 and SEAQUEST DSV, and Leo Hourvitz, a computer animator of vast experience. A new element was added with two live-action guests, Hong Kong actress Amy Chia and actor/singer Jay Miao.

Meanwhile ANIME AMERICA played host to manga giant Monkey Punch (see our upcoming interview in issue #8!), creator of LUPIN III and one of the most respected figures in the industry, and to the gifted and gorgeous Megumi Hayashibara, whose performances in a huge range of roles from Ranma-chan in RANMA 1/2, through Pai in 3 x 3 EYES, to her latest role in SLAYERS, attest to her gifts as a voice actress but form only one side of her talents. She is also a popular singer and her concert at the convention was an eagerly-awaited treat for her fans. Among gaijin guests were two Canadian actresses attending their very first convention, who won great popularity by their willingness to join in and enjoy themselves, even to the extent of auctioning themselves off as lunchdates at the charity auction - Venus Terzo, the voice of Ranma-chan in the US dubs, and Myriam Sirois, the American voice of Akane! Artist Robert DeJesus, whose cute-girl pinups are objects of desire to a whole legion of fans, completed the major guest roster.

A QUESTION OF STYLE

The two conventions had totally contrasting styles and a very different 'feel'. ANIME EXPO was frantic, fast and fun, with everything happening at once - guests, games, previews, industry panels, signing sessions; even with three of us - myself, Steve, and AUK writer Jim

THE EXPO FILES FREE

Issue 4

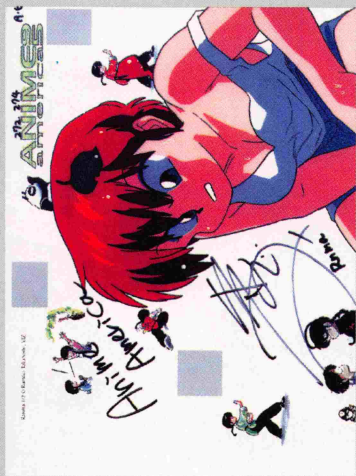
Saturday Evening, July 1, 1995

Mikimoto Arrives at Anime Expo '95

The name Mikimoto Haruhiko is virtually synonymous with one of the most widely renowned anime series, *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross*. Considered to be his breakthrough work, not surprisingly, it is often quoted by fans as one of if not the series that started anime on their journey towards adulthood.

a belief that he would have benefited from it. Before becoming one of the industry's premiere designers, Mr. Mikimoto was a college student in the engineering department. But in a stroke of





ANIME AMERICA
JULY 6th- July 9th
San Jose
California

WINNERS

Swallow - there was no way we could cover everything that was happening and there was a constant air of excitement. By contrast ANIME AMERICA had a more relaxed, laid-back atmosphere this year; everyone was out to have a good time, but in a less frenetic way. Maybe the calm, spacious Red Lion Inn, set in a quiet suburb, helped give ANAM a more restful atmosphere than the bustling LA Airport Hilton where AX was held; certainly the massive company sponsorship garnered by AX meant that the sponsoring companies contributed very heavily to the programme, with guests, premieres and panels. However both conventions went wild after dark, with parties galore and all-night video sessions for those who thought sleep was a waste of time; and both conventions' dealers rooms were constantly packed with fans eagerly hunting for that bargain cel or long-sought-after roman album, completing their video collections or just drooling at the goodies on show.

CONTROVERSEY CORNER

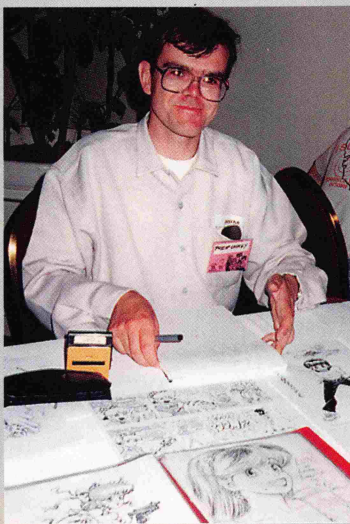
The biggest controversy was undoubtedly the formation of JAILED; the issue was discussed at almost every panel and is obviously of major concern to US fans. However since our SOAPBOX feature contains several representative points of view on this, there's no purpose in repeating the arguments here. Just to make sure the 'badges' controversy from last year wasn't repeated, ANAM had a very attractive selection of special colour badges for preregistered attendees, guests and workers, ready for the opening of the convention.

FANDOM IN ACTION

Fan activity was firmly to the fore; conventions happen once a year but clubs, showing groups, zines and so on carry the otaku message all the year round. We spoke to many club members and zine editors and the message was always the same: American fans want more and more contact with their fellow-fans all over the world. And American anime retailers certainly want foreign customers, while the US anime video companies are busy building worldwide links and want to know what all their customers, domestic and foreign, think of their products. So if you're interested in making US fan contacts or finding out more about US video releases, look in our AFX American Anime Directory for contact details for all the groups we met at ANAM and AX! And if you're planning a holiday next year, consider a visit to a US convention - we can honestly recommend it as a great way to meet fellow-fans and broaden your anime experience.

ART FOR ARTS SAKE

An often-neglected feature of US conventions, unknown here in the UK, is the Artists' Alley or Artists' Ghetto. Here individual artists, from top pros to beginners, can sit and work under the eyes of their peers and fandom, producing one-off custom pics or selling their work. AFX recipe artist Philip Laskey was persuaded to try his luck in the Alley at ANAM this year, and not only thoroughly enjoyed himself but sold many of his sketches of anime cuties to appreciative US fans.



PHIL LASKEY

THE AFX AMERICAN ANIME DIRECTORY

CLUBS AND NEWSLETTERS/ZINES
This list makes no claim to be comprehensive - if your club isn't here, why not write to us and get it listed in FANSCENE ROUNDDUP? And if writing for info, remember the ssaef/IRCS!

ANIME.COM Web site for anime info, ordering goodies, reviews, etc. Will be at <http://www.anime.com>, for more info email info@anime.com, tel (001) 602 303 9500.

ANIME HASSHIN - AFX recommended, one of the best clubs in the world with international membership & a superb newsletter, THE ROSE. Write to Lorraine Savage, ANIME

HASSHIN, PO Box 391036, Cambridge, MA 02139-1036, USA.

ANIME SACRAMENTO - informative newsletter, not as fancy as some but packed with info, and regular meetings from Laurine White's super club. AFX recommended. Write to Laurine White, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, CA 95841, USA.

ANIMOVEMENT, bimonthly newsletter/fanzine on anime & manga. Write to Randy Navarro Jr., The Animovement, 8520 Sturbirdge Circle West, Jacksonville, FL 32244-5797, USA.

BAY AREA ANIMATION SOCIETY (BAAS), friendly and welcoming group, meetings, social stuff, newsletter, highly recommended by Team AUK. Write to BAAS, PO Box 720244, San Jose, CA 95172-0244, USA.

CAL-ANIME ALPHA, one of a group of anime club chapters based around but not restricted to the University of California. Meetings, tape library, newsletter, merchandise. Write to Cal-Anime Alpha, P.o. Box 42634, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA. email anime@ocf.berkeley.edu.

C/FO, LA's oldest anime club, founded 1977; meetings, bulletin, great club. Write to Cartoon/Fantasy Organisation, c/o Fred Patten, Secretary, 11863 West Jefferson Blvd, Culver City, CA 90230-6322, USA.

CLUB ANIME gives shows, lectures, attends conventions. Write to George Greene, PO Box 1551, Winton, CA 95388, USA. email ggreene@koko.csustan.edu

INLAND EMPIRE ANIME, bulletin, news, reviews, meetings. Write to Wayne Wright, 1575 Lillian Lane, Highland, CA 92346, USA, email beast@htonight.jpl.nasa.gov

NORTHERN OREGON VANCOUVER ANIME, bulletin, library, meetings, friendly anime fans. Write to Scott Rose or Jeff Milburn, 10116 NW 29th Ave, Vancouver, WA 98685, USA.

OTAKU SHIRASE, anime newsletter with reviews, info, opinion, translations. Write to Josh Ritter, 457 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008, USA.

SCIENCE FICTION ANIMATION CONFEDERATION, friendly East Coast club, good newsletter BUFFALO CRISIS. write to James Meier, SFAC, 9135 Alexander Road, Batavia, NY 14020, USA. email SFAC@AOL.COM

SUMMER SIDE, friendly Southern California club with regular meetings. Call Alec Orrock on (001) 714 643 8352 (answering machine) or email orrock@ix.netcom.com

TRANSMASTERS, International Transformers Fan Club. Write to Joe Eibe, 650 Pacific Avenue, Willows, CA 95988, USA. **TSUNAMI** Anime & Manga Quarterly - nothing to do with the French zine of the same name - games, music, conventions, interviews etc. Write to Editor-in-Chief, Tsunami, 4708 Cherokee St Apt. 102, College Park, MD 20740-1874, USA. email godiva@wam.umd.edu

ANIME COMPANIES

A.D.VISION INC., SW Plaza Building, 5750 Bintliff #217, Houston, TX 77036-2123, USA. Subtitled videos, FANIME anime magazine, own comic imprint GRAPHIC VISIONS.

ANIMEIGO, INC., PO Box 989, Wilmington, NC 28402-0989, USA, email 72447.37@compuserve.com. America's premier pro subtitled house now does dubs too, also growing range of merchandise. Fan-friendly service from the best in the business.

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Suite #204, San Antonio, TX 78240, USA. Publishers of the excellent MANGAZINE anime/manga magazine, big range of American and Japanese translated manga/dojinshi.

BOOKS NIPPAN, 1123 Dominguez Street, Unit K, Carson, CA 90746, USA. Huge selection of Japanese merchandise, CDS, LDS, American releases. Club members get discount on catalogue prices! Also runs own video label, US Renditions.

CENTRAL PARK MEDIA.

250 W 57th St, Suite 317, New York, NY 10107, USA. Own labels US MANGA CORPS, ANIME 18 and CENTRAL PARK MEDIA, also distributes many other labels in

THE RIGHT STUF, US RENDITIONS, SOFTCEL PICTURES. Now has own comic imprint, CPM COMICS.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

INC., 727 N. Hudson St. Suite 3, Chicago, IL 60610, USA. email

manga@manga.com. web <http://www.polygram.com/manga>. US arm of Manga Entertainment Ltd, includes the former LA HERO company.

PIONEER LDCA, PO Box 22782, Long Beach, CA 90810, USA (Attn: Animation Dept). US arm of Pioneer Japan and 'big brother' of the UK division. Great newsletter.

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS, 149 Madison Ave Suite 202, New York, NY 10016, USA. New kids on the block in anime already have a good reputation in screensavers and CD-ROM.

STAR ANIME ENTERPRISES, 17 Meadowfield Lane, Glen Cove, NY 11542, USA. Another new video label, first title HOMEROOM AFFAIRS out on 2 tapes.

STREAMLINE PICTURES not only dubs and sells videos to the fan and mainstream market, but gets anime on TV too. Now the company is branching out into merchandise with its own range of anime and game model kits from STREAMLINE CD, and superb anime cels. Write for more information to Streamline Pictures, PO Box 691418, W. Hollywood, CA 90069, USA.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS INC, 653 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94107, USA. Home of ANIMERICA, MANGA VIZIONS anthology, and VIZ VIDEO. Expanding range of translated manga and merchandise, mail order via VIZ SHOP-BY-MAIL.

V-MAX, R. Talsorian Games, Inc, PO Box 7356, Berkeley, CA 94707, USA. Elegant anime zine with strong tv focus, well worth seeking out.

CONVENTIONS - see our monthly convention listing in FANSCENE ROUNDDUP

RETAILERS, ARTISANS

DARK STUDIOS INC, Harry Inman, 317 Chaparral St., Salinas, CA 93906, USA.

Amazing craftsmanship in building and painting items from stock kits to full size custom masks.

LASER PERCEPTIONS, 3300 Judah St., San Francisco, CA, USA. LDs, CDs.

KIMONO MY HOUSE, 1424 62nd Street, Emeryville, CA 94608, USA. email kimono@slip.net. A huge selection of toys and collectibles from Tetsuwan Atom right up to the latest TV craze. Friendly, knowledgeable staff. Want list service, wholesale service, catalogue \$2 (USA).

NICHIBEI ANIME CLUB, PO Box 12783, La Jolla, CA 92039-2783, USA, email 73113.3242@compuserve.com. Cels and collectibles, friendly service from David and Miyako.

NIKAKU ANIMART, 615 N. 6th St., San Jose, CA 95112, USA. The best anime and manga mail order service in the Western world, bar none, with a fast, friendly and knowledgeable response to orders from all over the globe.

PARADIGM JAPANESE ANIMATION, 2425B Channing Way Suite 357, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA, offers US and Japanese anime tapes, CDs, LDs.

SUPER COLLECTOR, 16547 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708, USA. Anime, comic and SF store, catalogue \$2 (USA)

UCI BOOKSTORE not only offers a big anime and manga stock but also has a web site which can be used for information, ordering and merchandise enquiries. Visit the store on campus at UCI Irvine, or go to web <http://bookweb.cwis.uci.edu:8042/>, email mjkiley@uci.edu, tel (001) 714 824 2430.

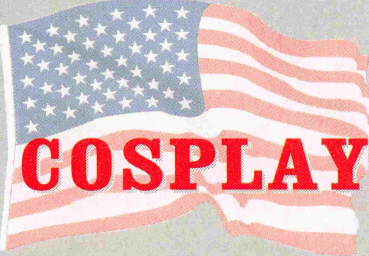
WOLF TOYS at JOHN'S COMIC CONNECTION, 46 E. Campbell Ave, Campbell, CA 95008, US; special orders call (001) 408 374 9686. Wolf really knows his robot toys, and his stock and contacts are excellent, especially for older diecasts, High Completes, etc.

ANIME AMERICA
Convention Newsletter

July 8, 1995

Coming Attractions
Main Programming Schedule

8:30am	AnAm Infomercial #1
11:00am	Anime RPG Panel
12:30pm	VIZ Video
2:30pm	F.A.C.E. Kobe & Oaaka Ch
	Relief Auction
	Megumi Concert
6:30pm	Masquerade
9:00pm	Music Videos and Midnigh
10:30pm	



COSPLAY USA

The Masquerades at both conventions confirmed that a quantum leap in both originality and standards of workmanship and presentation had occurred since last year. This is not, of course, to say that the usual multiple sightings of Ranma and Ryoga didn't occur, but they were much reduced and accompanied by many new costume characters. Style, presentation, humour and charm were much in evidence. Presentation honours must go to ANIME AMERICA, whose guest presenters, Ryo Saeba and Kaori Makimura (aka Brian Keesler and Lisa Nelson), not only kept the show on the road but even managed to get a script for the traditional closing group skit, in which anime charas were taken to task for selling out to Western dubbing companies. Best entrance was undoubtedly that of Rudy Hernandez at ANIME EXPO - well, you don't exactly sneak in unnoticed in a G GUNDAM mobile suit complete with working lights! The contest for the cutest was won hands down by the Goddess Trio at ANAM, but the most striking trinity

was that presented by Blair Heald at AX. Tall, blond and handsome, Blair's Anavel Gato is already well known at masquerades, but here he was joined by Blair's exuberant Terry Bogard and his chilling Lord Geisel. Not many people can claim the distinction of being a dead ringer for three entirely separate anime charas! Best minute detail (we ex-pro costumers notice these things) was on K.J. Karvonen's superb Briareos - he had rivetted metal plates to his boots so as to sound as convincing as he looked. Other outstanding costumes in two very strong shows were Rich Siemental's lovely Seito, both well put together and well acted, and a stunning White Ranger.



Above: ANAM Masquerade hosts, Ryo Saeba and Kaori Makimura (CITY HUNTER) aka Brian Keesler and Lisa Nelson



DAIRANGER'S KIBA RANGER (FANG RANGER) or POWER RANGER'S WHITE RANGER. Take your pick!

Photo's by Helen McCarthy except* by Phillip J. Velasquez



LORD GEISEL (PLASTIC LITTLE)

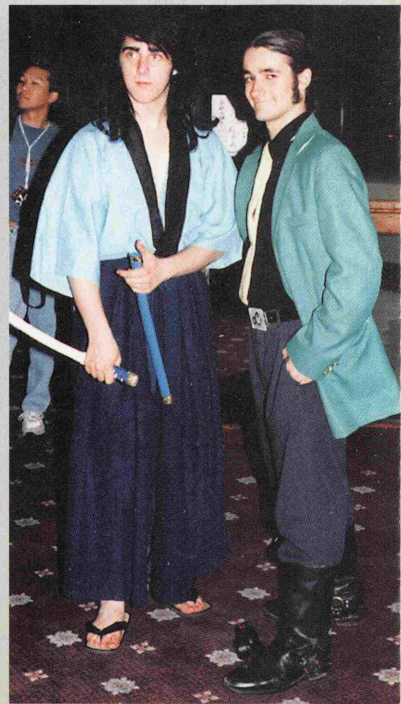


SAILOR MOON

FUJIKO, LUPIN III...



GOEMON, AND YET ANOTHER LUPIN III



Awards were as follows :

ANIME EXPO

Best Immortal workmanship
Lisa Garcia as SKULD
 Best Mortal Workmanship
Marty Garcia as DEEDLIT
 Best Multiple Anime Personality
Blair Heald as LORD GEISEL (PLASTIC LITTLE), ANAVEL GATO (GUNDAM 0083) and TERRY BOGARD (FATAL FURY).
 Best NC-17 (Female)
Woody Welch as MISS TOGAMI (UROT-SUKIDOJI)
 Best NC-17 (Male)
Sean Mauzano as SHAMPOO
 Best presentation
Rich Siemental as SEITO (TOMBSTONE FOR FIREFLIES)
 BEST OVERALL and BEST OF SHOW
Rudy Hernandez as G GUNDAM

ANIME AMERICA

Best Skit
THE GODDESS TRIO as AAA MEGAMISAMA
 Best Construction
K.J. KARVONEN as BRIAREOS
 Most Humerous
PETER BROWN as SHAMPOO
 Judges Choice
ROBERT LANTZ as NEO VADER (LUPIN) III
 Fans Choice
MATT MURRAY as THE EXTRA
 (Chosen by audience acclamation)

Thanks to George and Dennis for help with the names!



GAMILON OFFICER (SPACE CRUISER YAMATO AKA STARBLAZERS)



DEEDLIT (RECORD OF LODOSS WAR)



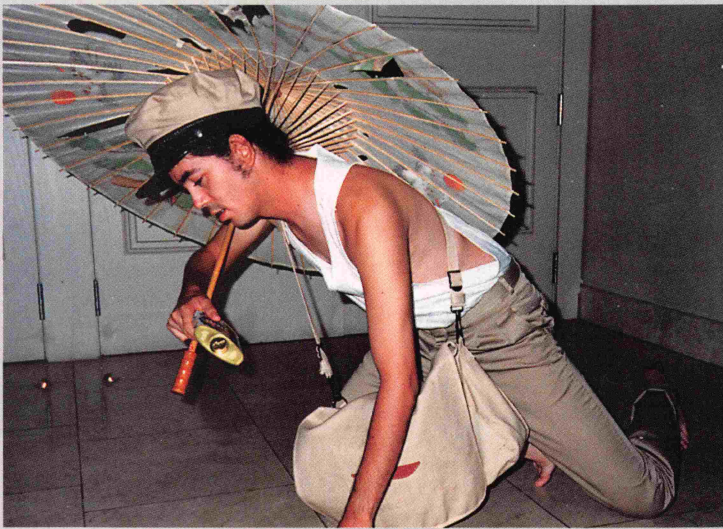
SKULD (AH, MY GODDESS)



MISS TOGAMI (UROTSUKIDOJI)

SEITO (TOMBSTONE FOR FIREFLIES)

DEUNAN, BRIAREOS AND TERRORIST (APPLESEED)*



URD, BELLDANDY, AND SKULD (AH, MY GODDESS)



SATOSHI URUSHIBARA

INTERVIEW

KINJI YOSHIMOTO

Chara designer

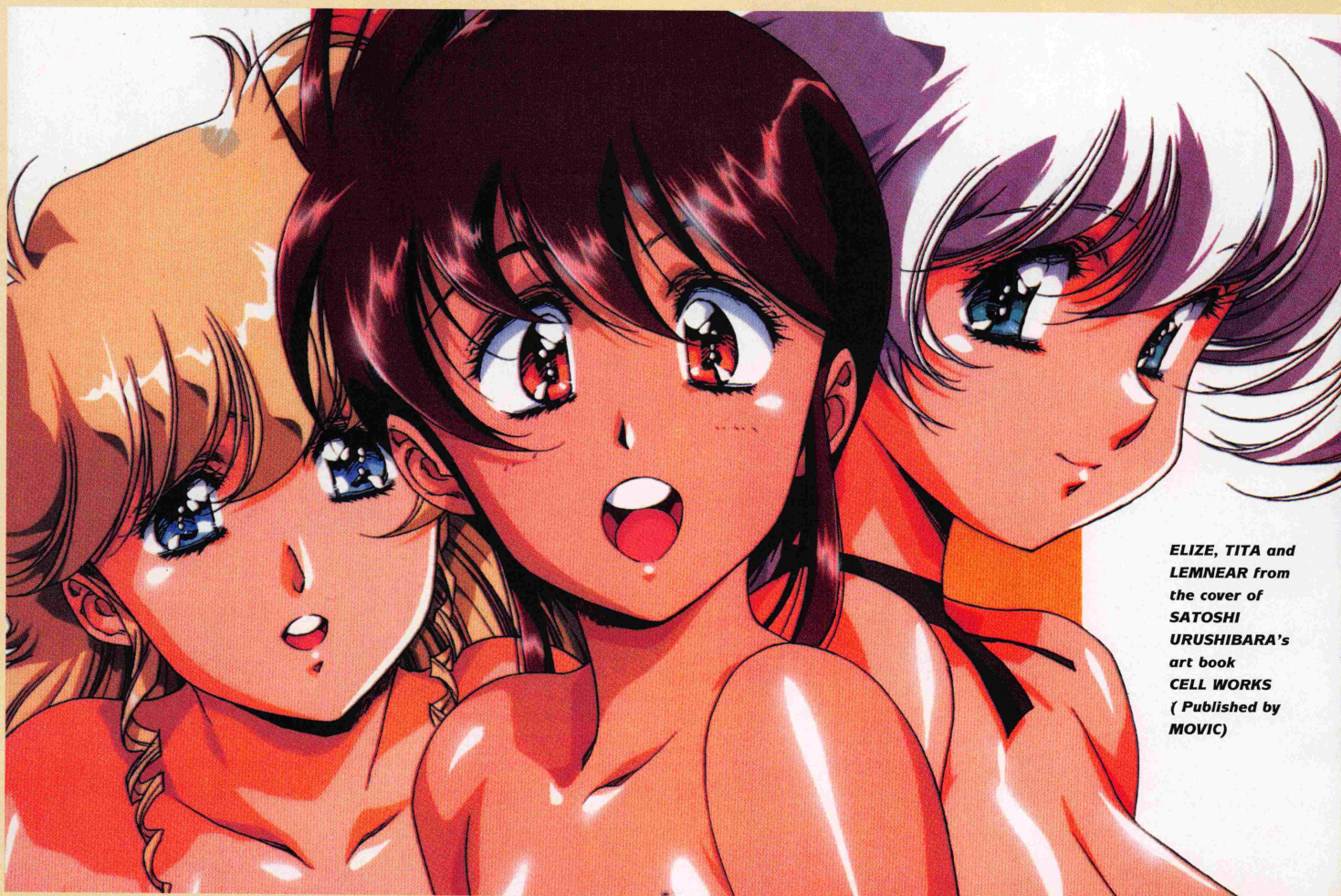
Satoshi Urushibara is best known in the West as creator and designer of the anime and manga *PLASTIC LITTLE* and *LEGEND OF LEMNEAR*.

He has also designed charas and acted as production supervisor for *RAVEN TENGU KABUTO*, *WINGS OF DARKNESS BALKISAS* and *SCHOOLYARD SKETCHES*; he was also guest chara designer and production supervisor on *BUBBLE GUM CRISIS 7* and *HURRICANE LIVE 2033*, and worked on *CRYING FREEMAN*, *RECORD OF LODOSS WAR* and *FIVE STAR STORIES*. He and Kinji Yoshimoto have been friends since their high school days and enjoy working together.



Director

Kinji Yoshimoto has filled many roles: in-betweener on *MACROSS : DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?*, animator on *MEGAZONE 23* parts 1-3, *WINGS OF HONNEAMISE*, *AIM FOR THE ACE*, *BATTLE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL* and *ROUJIN Z*, storyboard artist on *LEGEND OF LEMNEAR*, *LA BLUE GIRL*, *MACROSS II*, *PLASTIC LITTLE* and *SCHOOLYARD SKETCHES*, supervising production on *KABUTO*, *LEMNEAR* and *SCHOOLYARD SKETCHES*, assistant director on *AIM FOR THE TOP!* *GUNBUSTER 2*, directing *BUBBLEGUM CRISIS 7*, *CRYING FREEMAN 4*, *CLASSMATES*, *LEGEND OF LEMNEAR* and *PLASTIC LITTLE*. Chara designer on *LA BLUE GIRL* and his own new project, *MAGICAL BASEBALL*.



ELIZE, TITA and LEMNEAR from the cover of **SATOSHI URUSHIBARA's** art book **CELL WORKS** (Published by MOVIC)

SATOSHI URUSHIBARA AND KINJI YOSHIMOTO in conversation at **ANIME EXPO** with our own **Helen McCarthy, Chris Keller of V-MAX (USA), Lars Erbstoesser of Animaniam (Germany), and Amos Wong of Nintendo Magazine System (Australia).**
ANDY KIM was the interpreter.

Q Did you have any formal art training or education?

SU : No, no training at all - I just did it!

KY : I didn't even start drawing my own art until the second year of highschool, so I had a really late start! After we graduated from high school, I really began my training by working with Mr. Urushibara, and I've learned as we went along. He's my sempai. (This Japanese term indicates an older 'mentor' who will help the younger, less experienced fellow student or colleague find their feet and make progress.)

Q What inspired you both to go into the anime industry?

SU : For me, it was two great works of art - GALAXY EXPRESS 999 and SPACE CRUISER YAMATO. When I saw them I was just a kid and I really liked them, but I didn't form any definite plans at that stage to go into the industry. That was definitely the trigger, though.

Q A number of American comic and anime companies are starting to get very involved in CD-ROM, and Monkey Punch said last year that he thought it was the wave of the future. Do you have any plans for doing anything on CD-ROM?

KY : Well, the CD-ROM format in anime really depends on what the companies want to do. It's very rare for anyone to say to an employer "let's do a CD-ROM" - normally the company provides the initiative for that sort of thing. Some companies won't do it, so it's a big "if" at the moment!

Q Will there be more PLASTIC LITTLE anime or manga - the world has such rich background detail it seems a pity not to see more stories about it?

SU : Yes, we both want to continue the story in anime or manga form. It's not so easy right now, so the project is on the back burner, but we'll continue when the time is right.

Q Was this always your plan?

KY : Yes, the anime is more of a

side story or a teaser - the main story of PLASTIC LITTLE is yet to come!

Q In your colour artwork, the style is so very detailed and sophisticated - were there any special difficulties in transferring it to the screen?

SU : Well, normally a manga is released and then the anime based on it, but with PLASTIC LITTLE the anime was the first and the manga came later. We planned ahead and tried to figure out in advance the easiest possible ways to produce high quality anime without killing ourselves!

KY : Normally, in anime, you have high points and low points, some scenes not quite so detailed - but we were concentrating so hard on getting it absolutely right that there were no highs and lows!

Q You've known each other since highschool - what are the advantages and disadvantages of working with someone you've known for so long?

SU : Of course, the big advantage is that we know each other's capabilities and limitations; and we're a team, we trust each other. The disadvantage is that when the workload gets heavy, we can pass it along and take advantage of our friendship to offload work onto each other!

Q What was the intended age of the audience for PLASTIC LITTLE? It's R-rated in Australia.

SU : In Japan, it's aimed at the highschool and college audience.

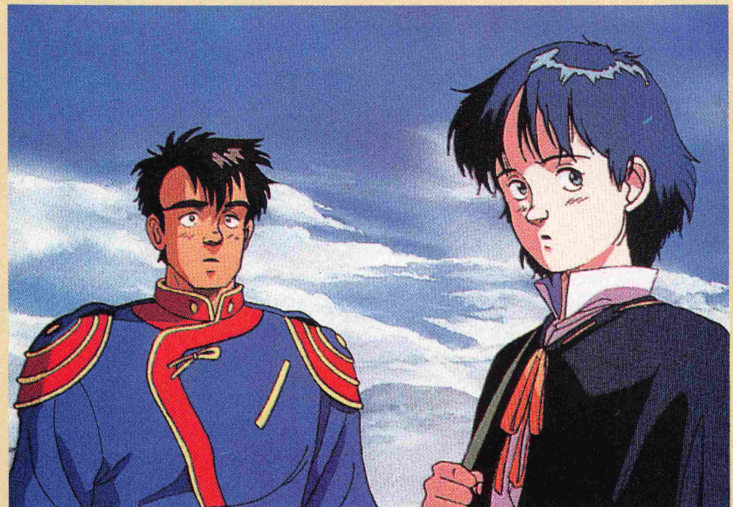
KY : Is that rating because of the exposure?

Q : Yes - we've got a fairly high level of censorship in Australia.

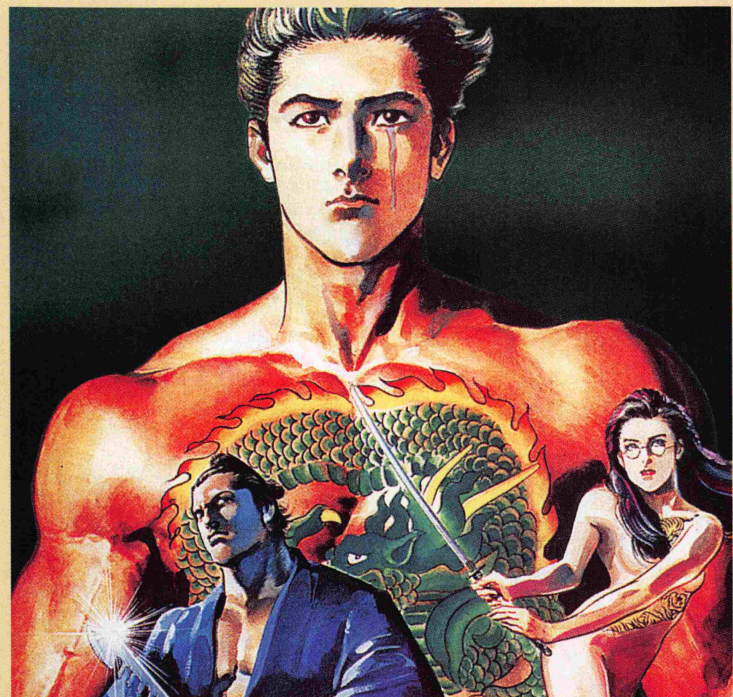
KY : Even in Japan, the truth is it was a borderline case. It's not intended to be an X-rated type of film; we just intended to show things as they are in any given situation. For example, the scene with Titan and Elize in the bath wasn't meant to be sexual in any way, but if you have people in the bathtub, then of course they will be naked. One of the main problems is probably that scene with the shaking breasts. Well, obviously, in a real life situation this kind of thing would happen and the only moral problem is in the moral attitude of the viewer. We were very careful to make those scenes exactly true to life because we really didn't want this kind of reaction to happen. Also, of course, PLASTIC LITTLE was made for the Japanese audience and never intended to be released worldwide, so the reaction to it in other countries wasn't something we had considered. This has been a good learn-



Above: *VISION* from *BGC: 7 DOUBLE VISION*
Below: *WINGS OF HONNEAMISE*



Below: *CRYING FREEMAN 4*



ing experience for both of us.

Q *In the West, anime like THE GUYVER, UROTSUKIDOJI and FIST OF THE NORTH STAR are best-sellers. Do you think that sex and violence are essential elements of anime?*

SU : Well, LEGEND OF LEMNEAR was our experiment in violence; conversely, with PLASTIC LITTLE we tried to cut down the violence, but to show the physical aspects of the story as naturally as possible. When people get to know and trust each other, and bare their souls in a relationship, taking a bath together, naked, is a symbol of that kind of trust. Both Tita and Elize had a hard time at the end of the story, when Tita has to become a murderer, and we had to think how best to express that, not just to show violence for its own sake but the effects. As for whether or not violence is necessary in anime -

KY : The final judgement is with the viewer. The consumer makes the decision, and if consumers demand very violent programming the industry will respond. Rather than the animator being blamed, perhaps the viewer should consider his own responsibility.

SU : The way most Japanese writers think is, they don't get into a pattern of "I'll show this in my story because I want to" - violence, sexual violence and so on should only be in the story to pass on a moral message to the consumer that this is not the right thing to do.

Q *LEGEND OF LEMNEAR and PLASTIC LITTLE show that you have a real talent for action/adventure stories. How did you learn to handle the techniques of story pacing and choreography of action sequences?*

SU : We've watched many, many anime and live-action movies and analysed other creators' techniques. We've learned a lot from these and



LEGEND OF LEMNEAR

used them to help develop our own way of handling action sequences.

Q *Are there any specific titles that stand out as particularly influential for you?*

KY : That's hard to say when you watch so many! After a while your mind goes blank ...

Q *Are there any artists and writers whose work you particularly enjoy?*

SU : Osamu Dezaki has always been one of my most admired directors, as has Isao Takahata. As for character designers, I really enjoy the work of Akio Sugino on titles like COBRA, ASHITA NO JOE (TOMORROW'S JOE, a boxing series) and ACE O NERAE (AIM FOR THE ACE, a tennis soap).

KY : Alan Parker is a favourite of mine. I love Tarkovsky's work, and anything by Robert Zemekis always makes me feel good - I watch his films for pure entertainment.

Q *Recently many Japanese artists and animators have been designing charas for computer games - have you been approached to work on games?*

SU : We've already released a computer game with our designs - DER LANGRISSER, for the Sega Saturn and the Playstation.

Q *Mr. Yoshimoto, you worked on WINGS OF HONNEAMISE. What level of research did the animation staff have to do to get that fantastic amount of detail in the design?*

KY : At that time, I wasn't in charge of anything, I was just doing one section of the animation, so I didn't have the responsibility of doing research. The director, producer and main staff did all that and just gave me the production sketches to work from.

Q *Monkey Punch has said that many famous artists, even the great Osamu Tezuka, would get locked away in rooms by their editors to keep to their manga deadlines. Have you had such problems, Mr. Urushibara?*

SU : Yes, I've had my share of 'kanzume' (being imprisoned to work) - several times!

Q *Mr. Urushibara, you were guest chara designer on BUBBLE GUM CRISIS 7. How and why were you chosen for that?*

SU : The same production company that did LEGEND OF LEMNEAR did BUBBLEGUM CRISIS 7; it just so happened that a co-worker and friend who had done BGC 5 and 6 didn't want to do BGC7, and as LEMNEAR was finished and I had some time, the company asked me to do it.

Q *When you have some free time, what do you like to do?*

SU : I just play computer games and go to the cinema.

KY : Me too - and I also like simulation games; right now I'm really into a game about horse racing!

Q *What are your plans for new projects in the immediate future?*

SU : I've got several manga works on line to be published eventually, and more anime work planned for next year - one title on which we'll work as a team, and some solo projects. I've not given up on manga, it just happens that there'll be more emphasis on anime for me next year.

KY : I am working on an anime based on baseball - MAGICAL BASEBALL - so please advertise it!

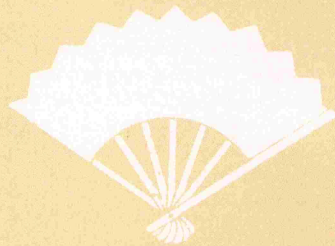
Q *Do Japanese anime directors have any influence over whether their films are cut in other countries?*

SU : We can't override other countries' censorship laws, but we prefer them not to be cut. For example, both PLASTIC LITTLE and LEGEND OF LEMNEAR were planned as running over an hour, not 45 minutes, so the film available now has already been cut as much as possible - it really shouldn't be cut further.

Q *On FIVE STAR STORIES, it's said that Mr. Nagano deliberately wrote and drew the manga in a style that would make it very difficult to animate. Did the staff find it very difficult?*

SU : At that time, I was working with Mr. Nobuteru Yuuki, helping him. He said 'it won't be easy, but it is possible to take Mr. Nagano's concept and style and create an original anime', so that was what we did.

Our time was up and so the interview came to an end. Many thanks to Mr. Urushibara, Mr. Yoshimoto, and interpreter Andy Kim for their kindness.



Urushibara-san has done artwork for several computer games. This is a section of his artwork for DER LANGRISSER.



Fans of the work of these two talented gentlemen might like to know that the following titles are available in the West :

PLASTIC LITTLE - UK /Europe : Kiseki Films, USA : AD Vision

LEGEND OF LEMNEAR - France : Kaze Animation, USA : US Manga Corps

BUBBLE GUM CRISIS - USA : AnimEigo, UK : Anime Projects

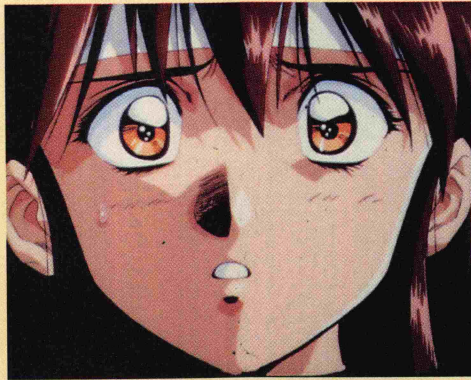
CRYING FREEMAN - UK Manga Video, USA Streamline Pictures

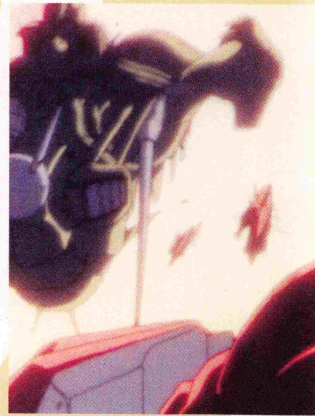
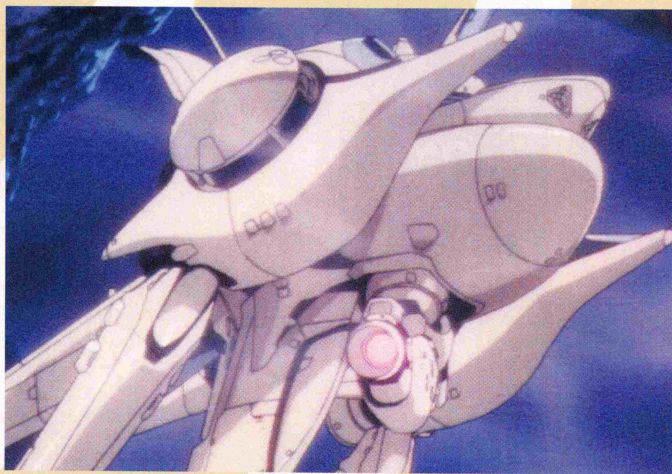
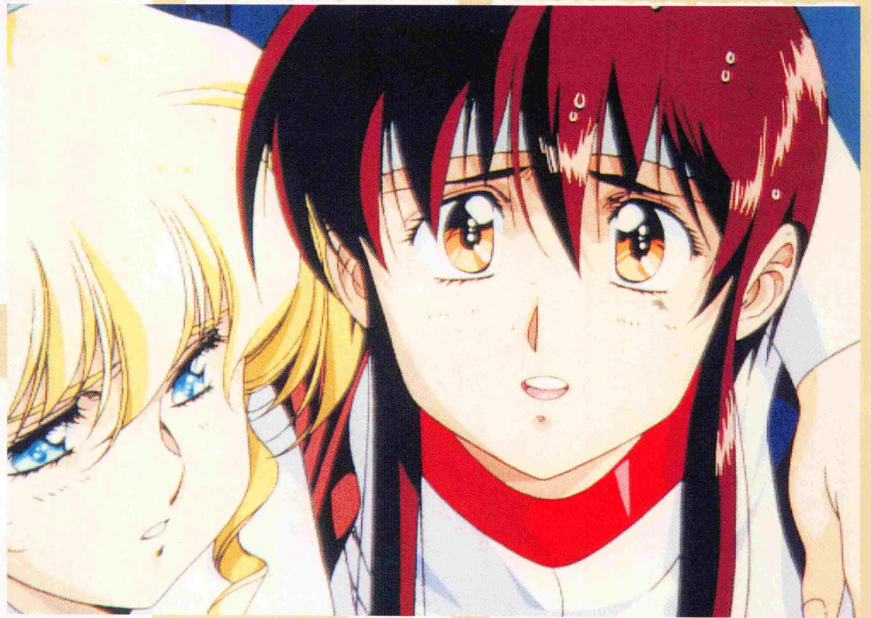
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR - USA : US Manga Corps, France : Kaze Animation

LA BLUE GIRL - USA: VT A.D. VISION, CD-ROM SOFTWARE SCULPTORS



プラチカ
Plastic Little
Pictorial Memory





Plastic

TITA

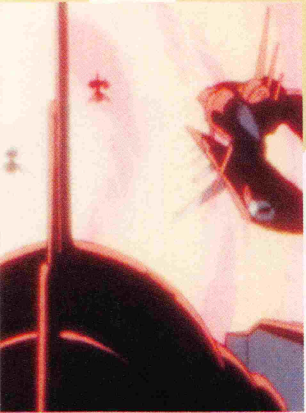
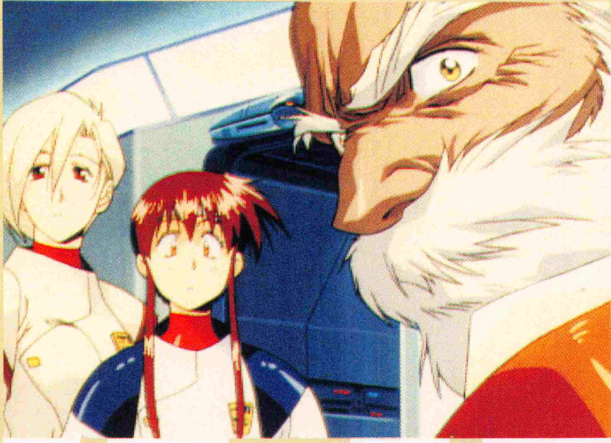


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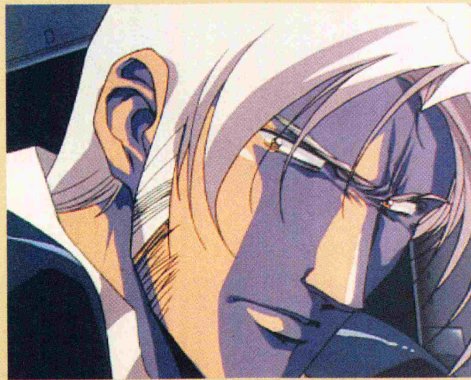
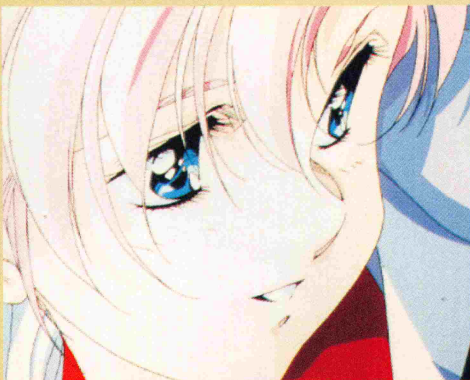


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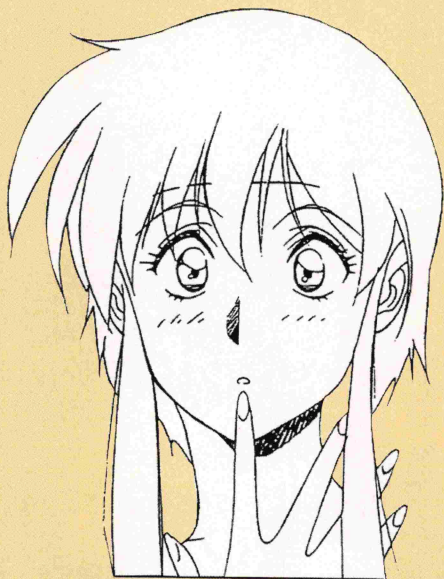
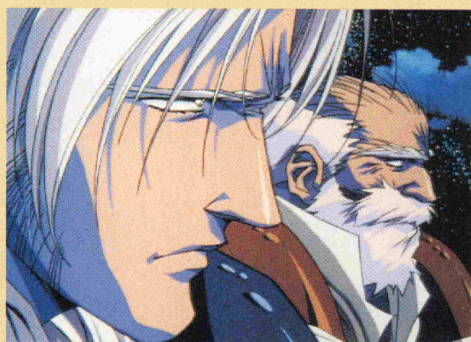
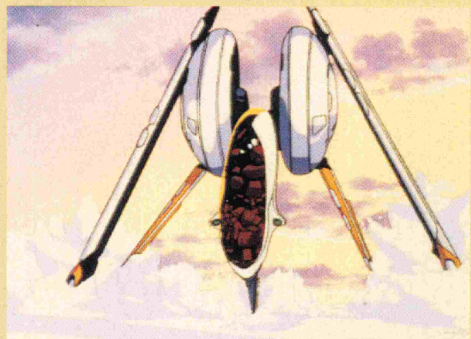
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ROGER AND MIHAIL



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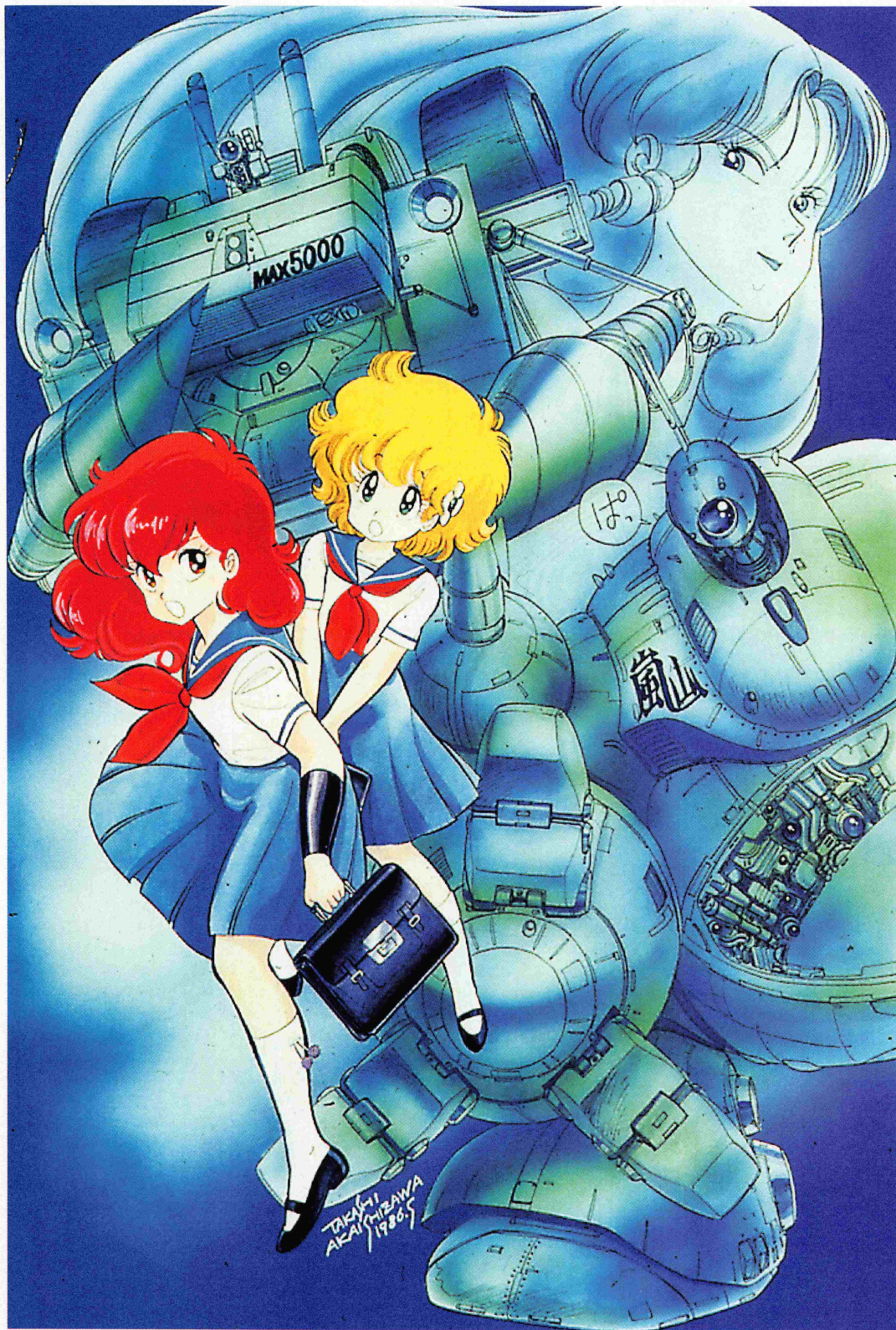
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HIGH SPEED CUTE

An overview of the **Project A-Ko** series by
Jim Swallow

Perhaps one of the most enduring images in anime (other than the ubiquitous 'giant robot') is the classic icon of the Japanese Schoolgirl; see her clad in blue-and-white sailor-suit uniform, with creases arrow-sharp and pom-pommed socks a-flying, for this 'typical young girl' stereotype ain't so typical. Usually she's the possessor of vast psychic powers, the alter-ego of a demon-killing heroine, or just a poor swot dragged into some passing interdimensional nexus ... And sometimes she's the strongest teenager on Earth, with hair the colour of rocket exhaust and a track speed that breaks the sound barrier. Without a doubt, the most famous schoolgirl ever to grace anime is A-Ko Magami, star (along with her childish and ditzzy pal C-Ko Kotobuki, and arch-foe style-queen B-Ko Daitokujij) of the PROJECT A-KO anime series. Originally released in 1986 by a team that had cut their teeth on soft-porn anime, the first A-KO movie was a theatrical feature that spawned three OAV sequels and a two-part 'alternate universe' spin-off. With the theatrical movie marketed in the UK by Manga Video in 1992 as one of their first post-AKIRA releases, the PROJECT A-KO saga has been translated in its entirety by American dubbers US Manga Corps; Manga Entertainment will be putting out the remainder of the A-KO adventures in the UK over the next few months.

But what is the essential appeal of PROJECT A-KO? Why is it listed in the collections of so many enthusiasts? Why is it one of the most often-recommended titles to new fans? The answer is simple - because it's funny. A mere hop-step-jump removed from the classic Western toonage of Tex Avery and Chuck Jones, the A-KO milieu combines fast'n'furious idiocy with sight gags, action setpieces and wholly ridiculous plotlines to create an entertaining roller-coaster ride. Devotees of that anime tradition of in-joke guest appearances and flash-frame images will find much to wear out their video's 'still-frame' function. This is high concept comedy, with a message: friends are worth fighting for.

This angle has been a source of sideways looks to some who view the series after reading that the relationships between the lead girls have a vague scent of lesbianism about them; but this conclusion is a shallow one, based on surface imagery and lack of understanding. Any reader clocking back a few years can seek out the girls' fiction subgenre of 'schoolgirl adventure' books and find tales that, with the addition of some mecha and explosions, bear a strong resemblance to A-KO plot threads. The concept of the 'platonic schoolgirl crush' here is totally without sexual content, and serves only to act as a central

story pivot - A-Ko and C-Ko's close companionship is envied by B-Ko, and so she seeks to take A-Ko's place for herself. Within this deceptively simple framework lie alien invasion plots, huge amounts of property damage, love, war, marriage and lots o' stuff blowing up in and around the confines of the much-trashed Graviton City (the only town with insurance rates comparable to GODZILLA-era Tokyo).



The prime source, the first PROJECT A-KO feature film, introduces us to the girls and their ongoing feud to win the freidnsHIP of C-Ko. A-Ko, the superstrong, superfast teen born of parents who bear a strong resemblance to the secret identities of Superman and Wonder Woman, finds herself pitted each schoolday morning against rich-kid genius B-Ko's increasingly large and complex battle mecha. The fights, while one-sided, make for great sport - a point lost on the girls' teacher, Miss Ayumi, who sees them being constantly late for her classes. While B-Ko plots her plots with henchwomen Asa, Ine, Ume and FIST OF THE NORTH STAR clonette Mari, A-Ko and C-Ko come under the scrutiny of Spy-D, a crossdressing woman from outer space. D is the spearhead of an alien invasion (led by the distinctly Harlock-influenced Captain Napolipolita) on its way to earth to recover their lost princess - C-Ko Kotobuki. When C-Ko is snatched by the aliens and Earth's defence forces are beaten back, A-Ko and B-Ko put aside their differences and make for the giant battleship to liberate the cloyingly cute Kotobuki. In an ending that eschews the traditional 'massive explosion wipes out bad guys' finale, the alien ship is pranged atop Graviton City's 2km-tall central tower, and all is right (albeit slightly sined) once more.

The first OAV sequel, PROJECT A-KO 2 : PLOT OF THE DAITOKUJI FINANCIAL GROUP, swings back into familiar territory; B-Ko plots once again her slow and terrible revenge upon A-Ko as school summer holidays loom. While D and Captain Napolipolita wine and dine A-Ko and C-Ko in their newly converted starship (once a battlecruiser, now a leisure complex) to ask for their help, B-Ko creates her masterwork mecha to waste A-Ko for sure. Enter her charismatic daddy, Hikaru, who promptly steals her design and builds an attack force. His goal - to capture the alien ship and loot its technology ... and once more the girls get caught in the crossfire as flames, fury and fart

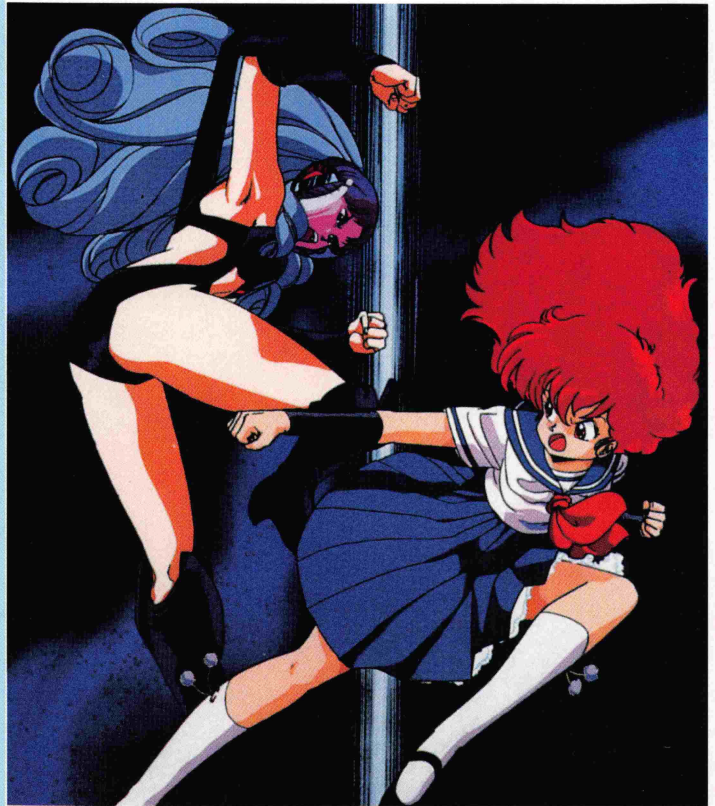
gags fill the air.

CINDERELLA RHAPSODY begins with a shojo/surreal pool game dream sequence, but soon takes a sharp turn into JUST SEVENTEEN photoromance territory when A-Ko feels the point of Cupid's arrow thanks to biker hunk Kei. The moody motorcyclist also snares the heart of B-Ko, and the battle begins anew with him as the new prize to be fought for. But while A-Ko moonlights at a burger bar to earn the cash for a swanky new outfit, her infatuation with Kei blinds her to the fact that he just might be in love with someone else ... someone shorter and more prone to fits of bawling ... RHAPSODY also introduces the local volunteer defence force's wacky mecha, as well as blowing a big hole (again) in the alien ship.

FINAL is the apt name for the last PROJECT A-KO OAV (although not the last A-KO story - see below). The spotlight turns to the demure Miss Ayumi as wedding bells ring for the girls' teacher. B-Ko's dad steps in to act as go-between and sets up a suitor - Kei! When C-Ko, and the lovelorn A-Ko and B-Ko, crash the bash all hell breaks loose, as a fleet of starships arrives with a wedding present no-one will forget in a hurry.

From here, the saga spun-off the established track into a twopart mini-series entitled A-KO THE VERSUS. The two parts (GREY SIDE and BLUE SIDE) took the established A, B and C-Ko characters and placed them in a more stylised SF background. Here, A-Ko and B-Ko are partners in a monster-hunting business who happen upon C-Ko (now the ten-year-old daughter of an interstellar corporate magnate) after a pair of nasty space pirates, Lisa and Grush, foul up a kidnap attempt. Deciding to claim the reward for the missing C-Ko, the erstwhile partners soon run across the pirates and their boss, Gail. When Gail "kills" B-Ko and escapes, A-Ko has no choice but to team up with tiny Space Patrolman Maruten to save her life. So endeth the first act. Part two uncovers the sinister Gail's nefarious plot to awaken a 'cosmic dragon' by channeling the spirit of Gail's evil master Xena through C-Ko. Some side-changing shenanigans on the part of B-Ko occur (attracted as she is to bad-boy Gail), but in the end friendship prevails, and the fight to stop the dragon chomping a hole in the cosmos is joined ...

After six adventures, the A-KO phenomenon is (for now) at an end. Like more readily labelled 'classics', PROJECT A-KO and its sister OAVs were an archetype, and as such deserve a place in anime academia. But forget all that and watch 'em because they're funny.



Above: A-KO and B-KO slug it out!
Below: B-KO models the AKIGIYAMA-23 battle armour





Above: **PROJECT A-KO FINAL.**
The end of the Saga? No way!



Below: **PROJECT A-KO THE VS BATTLE 1: GREYSIDE.** The cast (background) A-KO, C-KO - with MARUTEN on her head!, B-KO (foreground) bad guys LISA, GRUSH and GAIL.

PROJECT A-KO STAFF FILE

CAST

A-Ko Magami - Miki Ito
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4, A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

B-Ko Daitokuji - Emi Shinohara
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4, A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

C-Ko Kotobuki & Xena - Michie Tomisawa
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4, A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

Miss Ayumi - Asami Mukodono
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Asa - Yoko Agai
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Ume - Megumi Hayashibara
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Ine - Yoshiko Takamori
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Mari - Daisuke Gori & Sayuri Ikemoto
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Captain Napolipolita - Shuichi Ikeda
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Spy-D and Kei - Tesho Genda
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Hikaru Daitokuji - Yoshitada Otsuka
(A-KO 2, 4)

Maruten - Masami Kikuchi
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

Gail - Sho Hayama
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

Lisa - Saeko Shimazu
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

Grush - Hiroshi Takemura
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE & BLUE SIDE)

CREW

Director Katsuhiko Nishijima
(A-KO & A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE)

Yuji Moriyama (A-KO 2)

Shoichi Masuo (A-KO 3)

Shigeru Morikawa
(A-KO 4 & A-KO THE VS. BLUE SIDE)

Producer Naotaka Yoshida (A-KO)
Kazufumi Nomura (A-KO 2 & 3)

Original PROJECT A-KO story - Katsuhiko Nishijima and Kasumi Shirasaka

Screenplay - Yuji Moriyama, Katsuhiko Nishijima & Tomoko Kawasaki
(A-KO & A-KO 3)

Takao Koyama (A-KO 2)

Tomoko Kawasaki & Yuji Moriyama
(A-KO 4)

Katsuhiko Nishijima & Kasumi Shirasaka
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE)

Yuji Kawahara
(A-KO THE VS. BLUE SIDE)

Chara design - Yuji Moriyama
(A-KO, A-KO 2, 3, 4)

Hoyu Ikegami
(A-KO THE VS. GREY SIDE)

Katsuhiko Nishijima
(A-KO THE VS. BLUE SIDE)

(Special thanks to the folks at Antarctic Press, CPM Comics, Studio Go! and Ianus Publications for copious research assistance).

PROJECT A-KO : THE COMICS

If the animated adventures of our favourite all-girl triple-act weren't enough for you, American comics team Studio Go! and Central Park Media's new comics division have come together to bring A-Ko's hijinks to the printed page. Their initial release was PROJECT A-KO : THE GRAPHIC NOVEL, a reprint of the four-issue Malibu Comics miniseries of 1994 brought together under a single cover. The adaptation of Katsuhiko Nishijima's screenplay comes from the pen of Studio Go! Alumnus Tim Eldred, and art chores are split between Antarctic Press crewers Ben Dunn (pencils), Shon Howell (inks) and Albert Deschesne (colours). Eldred and Dunn adapt the anime in fine form, going a long way towards capturing the speedy gags and physical jokes in a freeze-frame format. CPM Comics' second release is PROJECT A-KO 2, also an

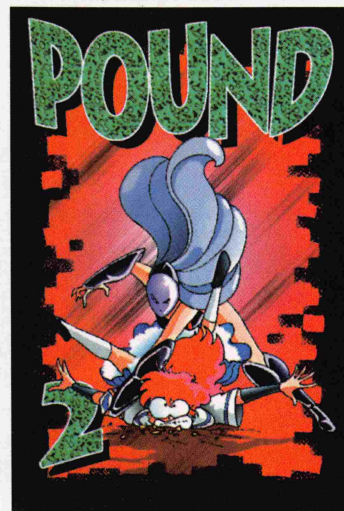
adaptation, but of the second movie. A-KO 2 is a three-issue limited series, with art and story jobs handled once more by Eldred and another Studio Go! team member, John Ott. In an attempt to create something more than a straight script-to-comic translation, additional lines of dialogue and gags have been fitted into the story. Rather than draw attention away from the main plotline, the extras work harder to set up the jokes and make them funnier; some of the sight-gags thrown in for good measure are also the source of a few laughs. CPM Comics' line manager Mike Lindsay has expressed interest in continuing the run of A-KO books after A-KO 2 finishes, and with the remainder of the PROJECT A-KO video library on Central Park Media's catalogue and due for UK release on Manga Video, good sales of the comics will likely lead to sequels and perhaps even original spin-offs, as with stablemate title M.D. GEIST.

*Below: Promotional A-KO artwork by BEN DUNN (colouring by PAT DUKE)
Right: A-KO The Role Playing Game Book and selection of cards for the PROJECT A-KO FIGHTER game.*



PROJECT A-KO: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

If you still can't get enough of the A-KO experience, the only option left is to go to Graviton City yourself - until recently an impossibility. Now, anyone can travel to the city by the crater and mix it with the world's fastest redhead, get kidnapped by aliens or just end up caught in the crossfire... The fellows at Dream Pod 9 (home of the HEAVY GEAR game) have created PROJECT A-KO : THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, for those of us who dream of creating our own A-KO adventures. The game comes as a 126-page softcover book, complete with thirty-six cards for the PROJECT A-KO FIGHTER game, similar to SP9's HEAVY GEAR FIGHTER and VIDEO FIGHTER., which can be used to simulate in-game combat or as a stand-alone game. The rules are snappy and simple, a stripped down version of DP9's SILHOUETTE house system, aimed at new roleplayers, so experienced gamers should be able to pick them up fast. While you may wonder how a concept as unique as A-KO could be expanded into an RPG, the system copes well, albeit with a few steals from TOON, a game in a similar vein. There's plenty of scope for characters outside the Schoolgirl/boy mould, and the example skills list runs from Slap Loudly to Convince Mom You're Not Doing Anything Wrong. The strong level of silliness in the mood of AKO : THE RPG might be annoying elsewhere, but here it's just about right. Any game that has the acronyms AYK? (Are You Kidding?) and WTF (Waay Too Far) can't be all bad. The only real downers are the lack of synopses in the sourcebook for the A-KO features, mistakenly assuming everyone who buys the game has seen all the anime; and the twenty-page scenario, which is too linear and has little player involvement.



Helen McCarthy profiles a recent entrant on the US anime scene, talks to its founder and President JOHN SIRABELLA, and looks at its currently available products.

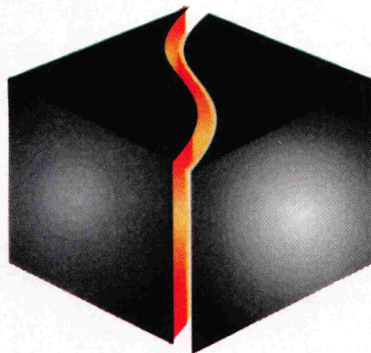
Already known for their popular RANMA 1/2, PROJECT A-KO and BUBBLEGUM CRISIS screensavers, Software Sculptors launched themselves into the anime market this spring via the novel route of a CD-ROM version for RECORD OF LODOSS WAR - of particular interest to British fans since this hugely popular title is not available on UK video release. CD-ROM release continued with the computer version of erotic hit LA BLUE GIRL. Then, in time for the summer conventions in California, came their first venture into video with two TV series - METAL FIGHTERS MIKU and ZENKI THE DEMON PRINCE, now joined on the lineup by the hugely successful SLAYERS, released commencing this autumn.

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS - THE STORY SO FAR

The company has been operating for about 5 years. President John Sirabella started Software Sculptors to create a consumer based software package; to pay the bills while development was going ahead, they started out in computer consulting for medium to large companies and soon built up an impressive client list of innovative US firms. John Sirabella gives great credit for their success to date to the other members of his team - Production Co-Ordinator Henry Lai, whose background in the computer consulting field and expertise in a range of software packages has stood him in good stead in creating the Video Jukebox which is such a major feature of the company's screensavers; Director of Marketing Sam Liebowitz, another computer consultant whose sales abilities have proved invaluable in getting the company's products into the stores and raising their profile in the Press and marketplace; and Director of Finance Rita Seto, a corporate finance professional whose expertise in cost-effective operations control has given Software Sculptors a firm base for expansion and made possible new projects like the video line. He adds that all this would not have been possible were it not for the support of his wife Sylvia and daughter Cara.

Asked what brought the company into anime, Sirabella says "This is a funny story; I had never heard of anime until we started to create the screen saver line. I was introduced to anime at a Creation convention in New York City. I was, and still am, a very big STAR TREK and X-FILES fan. During the convention, I noticed more tables for anime than STAR TREK. I began to talk to the table vendors, and bought OUT-

COMPANY PROFILE



SOFTWARE SCULPTORS

LANDERS and PROJECT A-KO. I enjoyed them very much and did some research on the industry, which was in its early stages and growing. We concluded that the same person who likes STAR TREK enjoys anime. There are many STAR TREK computer products out on the market, and it makes sense that this same person would want an anime related computer product. It was the perfect niche for a company our size to get in on before it got too big. In addition, as time went on, I found myself becoming more addicted to these videos, cels and soundtracks. I went to more conventions and was introduced to RANMA 1/2 and other series which are not available in the USA. I guess I became a fan-boy - an otaku!"

Sirabella and Lai work on the creative end of the project, with Henry Lai's slick CD-ROM interfaces presenting Sirabella's programs to optimum effect and his production skills preparing the titles Sirabella selects and licenses for the US market. However Sirabella adds "Let's not forget that it's through Sam's efforts in marketing and Rita's accounting that we're allowed to have all of this fun and still call it business!"

Software Sculptors video line is focussing on TV series, an area of

the market shunned by many other Western companies. Sirabella rejects the convention wisdom that commitment to release a longrunning series on video is financial and marketing suicide. His company has worked around the possible problem of falling market demand by buying the first 13 episodes of METAL FIGHTERS MIKU, ZENKI and SLAYERS and optioning the rest. If sales on one 13-episode chunk fall off dramatically, they are not committed to continue releasing tapes to fewer and fewer buyers. He points out that in the US market 5,000 sales per tape are enough to make it worthwhile to continue to release the series, and with this in mind it is not difficult for companies to arrange a reasonable deal with the Japanese originators.

While he has nothing against the current dominant trend to sex and violence in anime releases - he cites JUBEI NINPOCHO aka WIND NINJA CHRONICLES, released by Manga as NINJA SCROLL, as a personal favourite - he feels there is enough demand for variety in the market to sustain other categories of title. Once again, Software Sculptors has found a gap in the market. Another advantage of their choice of new TV series is that, unlike much of the OAV and film material being released by larger companies, the

titles chosen are currently hot in Japan. "Our acid test", he says, "is to see if the title we are going for is currently in a NEWTYPE issue. This is in no way a comment on how good or bad are the older series. If I could have had the chance to release RECORD OF LODOSS WAR (on video), do not think I would have passed on it for a second." And in line with this determination to stay current and topical, he constantly scans the Internet to find out what fans in the USA like and want to see. "It was this strategy that gave me the upper hand on SLAYERS. Several companies could have committed to SLAYERS before Software Sculptors, but did not know what this title was about, so passed on it. I saw all the positive feedback on the Internet and grabbed it up as quickly as humanly possible." He always welcomes fan input and every Sunday evening at 9 p.m. Eastern Seaboard Time (about 5 hours behind GMT) he's on the comics forum on Comuserve, talking to fellow anime fans and getting their feedback in direct discussion.

He also points out that if anime is to really make the breakthrough to huge popularity in the West, it will be through TV. "For a series to be on (US) TV, you need a full year of episodes (52 episodes) and our series have this number or more. We are ready!! Don't forget I do some work at Fox Broadcasting ..." With this in mind, he feels that METAL FIGHTER MIKU has great TV potential, with a good storyline which will appeal to both sexes, and no sex or graphic violence to upset TV programmers. ZENKI is a personal favourite; its "DRAGONBALL style of animation with an USHIO & TORA storyline" and the hilarious fights between lead charas Zenki and Chiaki give the show a broad appeal.

We asked him about the company's future plans. On the video side, he announced the company's acquisition of SLAYERS at Anime Expo, and feels it will be "the title that makes Software Sculptors a serious contender in the US anime industry". He is also pursuing a number of titles which will appeal to the largely neglected female market. On the CD-ROM front, the company is in negotiation for more titles to release as Quicktime CD-ROM discs. They view CD-ROM as an alternative way to enjoy anime, rather than a replacement for tape or LD. CD-ROM allows the viewer to play with the movie on his or her computer, using images, for instance as screen savers, and even adding personalised subtitles. They have taken advantage of a new subtitling feature within Quicktime for LODOSS and LA BLUE GIRL. "The response from fans has been great."

In a major new venture, the company has just signed a deal to produce



a METAL FIGHTER MIKU game for both Mac and PC platforms. "We're very excited about this and want to make it our biggest product for 1996. We expect a release date of June 1996 and hope to show it at Anime Expo '96."

Since Software Sculptors are rooted so strongly in the world of multimedia, we asked John Sirabella for his views on the future of interactive media in anime - is it a viable route for the entertainment industry or might it turn out to be an expensive blind alley? He feels it is already in that state, but that it could be a viable route once entertainment companies understand its applications and potential properly. "Many of the larger companies are not using the real advantages of multimedia within their products, but instead are just coming out with these products because they believe it is the wave of the future. Multimedia products are being created based on popular properties without giving any additional value to the user. Until the companies understand this concept, there will be money lost."

As for his hopes and dreams for the company in the next year, and the next five years, he had this to say: "If you had asked me a year ago, I would have said that we hope to produce a consumer based software product. I would have to say now that we hope to produce more anime related items. For the coming year, we feel our biggest release will be the METAL FIGHTER MIKU game. In addition we are hoping to become recognised as a producer of anime videos by releasing additional titles in the coming year. If these two goals come to happen, I will be a very happy person."

For the next five years our goals will include having one of our anime TV series on USA TV and porting many of the popular anime based games in Japan to the USA. We also hope to continue to grow with the growth of the anime industry in the next five years."

The company's fame is already growing, even outside the USA. "We are amazed at the amount of international mail we receive for our anime products. We try to service these people as best we can but feel so bad at the amount of shipping and export taxes they have to pay. They are desperate for these products. For international distribution we usually route enquiries to two companies who handle international orders; EduCorp, 7434 Trade Street, San Diego, CA 92121, tel (info) 1-619-536-9999, fax 1-619-535-2345, and Wierd Visions Media GmbH, postfach 73, 56239 Selters/WW, Germany, tel 2626-5216, fax 2626-1317. If there's no other alternative they can contact us directly and we will try to help them



Japanese Publicity
Flyer for
MIKU Volume 1.
The characters below
are (from left to
right) THE PRETTY
FOUR: SAYAKA,
GINKO, MIKU, NANA,
and villainess
SAPPHIRE, leader of
THE MOONLIGHT
JEWELS



Victor

out as best we can. We are also proud to say that we have received quite a few orders from Japan."

Interested fans can get in touch with Software Sculptors from 1st September 1995 at their new address:

Software Sculptors, 250 West 57th Street, Suite 326, New York, NY 10107, USA.

Tel: 1-212-245-9559, Fax 1-212-245-7579.

CompuServe account; 74020,3365.

METAL FIGHTER MIKU

It's 2061. Wrestling, a sport popular in almost every culture throughout history, has evolved into the most popular sport in the modern world - Women's Neo Pro-Wrestling. Starting with traditional pro wrestling tactics of ham and bodyslam in equal quantities, Neo Pro-Wrestling adds a new dimension - the teams of four girls are clad in high-tech 'Metal Suits'. This body armour enhances the fighter's speed and power and allows for spectacular fighting stunts, as well as fabu-

lous entrances to the ring in styles suited to the team's chosen image.

The manager of new team the Pretty Four would prefer his girls to concentrate on becoming idol singers rather than serious wrestlers. He's an old wrestling pro, and his wife, the team's 'mom', was a professional wrestler herself, so he knows just how vicious the sport can be under its razzmatazz trappings. Teenager Miku, however, is deadly serious about her sport. She wants to become the greatest Neo Pro-Wrestler of all, and even

dreams of one day being as good as her idol, the sport's grand champion, Aquamarine. To achieve her aim she is prepared to face top class teams like the Moonlight Jewels, the Lady Ninjas and the terrifying Crushers, four fighting females who would give the average silverback gorilla pause for thought. But there are forces at work of which she knows nothing. An old rival of her boss owns a huge entertainment conglomerate and has a deep-rooted, secret grudge against him that makes him determined to grind their team into the ground. His daughter, an elegant, ambitious businesswoman, has an axe of her own to grind against Aquamarine, and a secret of her own as well.

To help the team achieve their potential, they are given a new coach. Eiichi Suo used to be one of the top Metal Fighter coaches, training the grand champion Aquamarine. When she quit the sport in mysterious circumstances he hit the bottle, and he's still hitting it as hard as he knows how. Even though the champion has returned, she hasn't returned to his stable - what drove them apart? And how can the scruffy, smelly drunk who slumps in the corner of the gym and isn't even sure he wants to go on training anyone help the girls to reach the top of their sport? They soon find that he may be a drunk but he's no pushover, and his brutal training methods push them past their limits and provoke near-rebellion. Once Miku realises what he can do for them, though, she co-operates all the way, and as a result the girls begin to see a radical improvement in their fighting skills. Coach Suo doesn't just train their bodies - he makes them think about the techniques of their sport and the reasons behind every aspect of Neo Pro-Wrestling. Gradually the Pretty Four begin to sweep up the ratings, garnering Press and fan acclaim as they go.

The fastpaced action in each episode is typical of TV anime, where only keeping your audience thoroughly entertained will get them switching on at the same time every week. The quality of the animation isn't as high as for a theatrical release or some OAVs, but it's not bad, and the cute chara designs and well-planned storyboards sweep the action along. The music is fun and the whole package has charm in bucketloads. Software Sculptors have acquired the first 13 episodes of the series, and if it does well will buy more. Based on the first tape, they should have a hit on their hands. And if the projected second video release, ZENKI THE DEMON PRINCE, is half as enjoyable it'll be well worth waiting for. The first 3 episodes of both series are out now, each on one tape, and the next 10 episodes of each will follow between now and June 1996, two



From the pages of
MONTHLY DRAGON MAGAZINE, to Japanese TV,
now US Video release from Software Sculptors: **SLAYERS**.

eps to a tape. These tapes are NTSC format only; so far no plans for PAL release have been announced.

SCREENSAVERS

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS SCREENSAVER/ VIDEO JUKE BOX Cat no. SSSS-2001
PROJECT A-KO SCREENSAVER/VIDEO JUKEBOX Cat no. SSSS-2002
RANMA 1/2 SCREENSAVER/VIDEO JUKEBOX Cat no. SSSS 2003

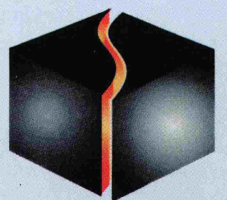
It's a simple idea; instead of the usual caricatures of original characters, random designs, or moving fishtanks, have actual segments from the anime in all their glory, with music direct from the soundtrack. Using the latest technology SSC have put together a kaleidoscope of the best clips from each title, and added a Video Jukebox of hot hits from the anime to accompany the clips. They are all great fun, though I must confess the PROJECT A-KO one is probably my personal favourite because it encapsulates the wackiness of that wonderful film. You can order your favourite, and find out if your computer will run the full array of sound and vision, from your specialist retailer.

ANIME ON CD-ROM

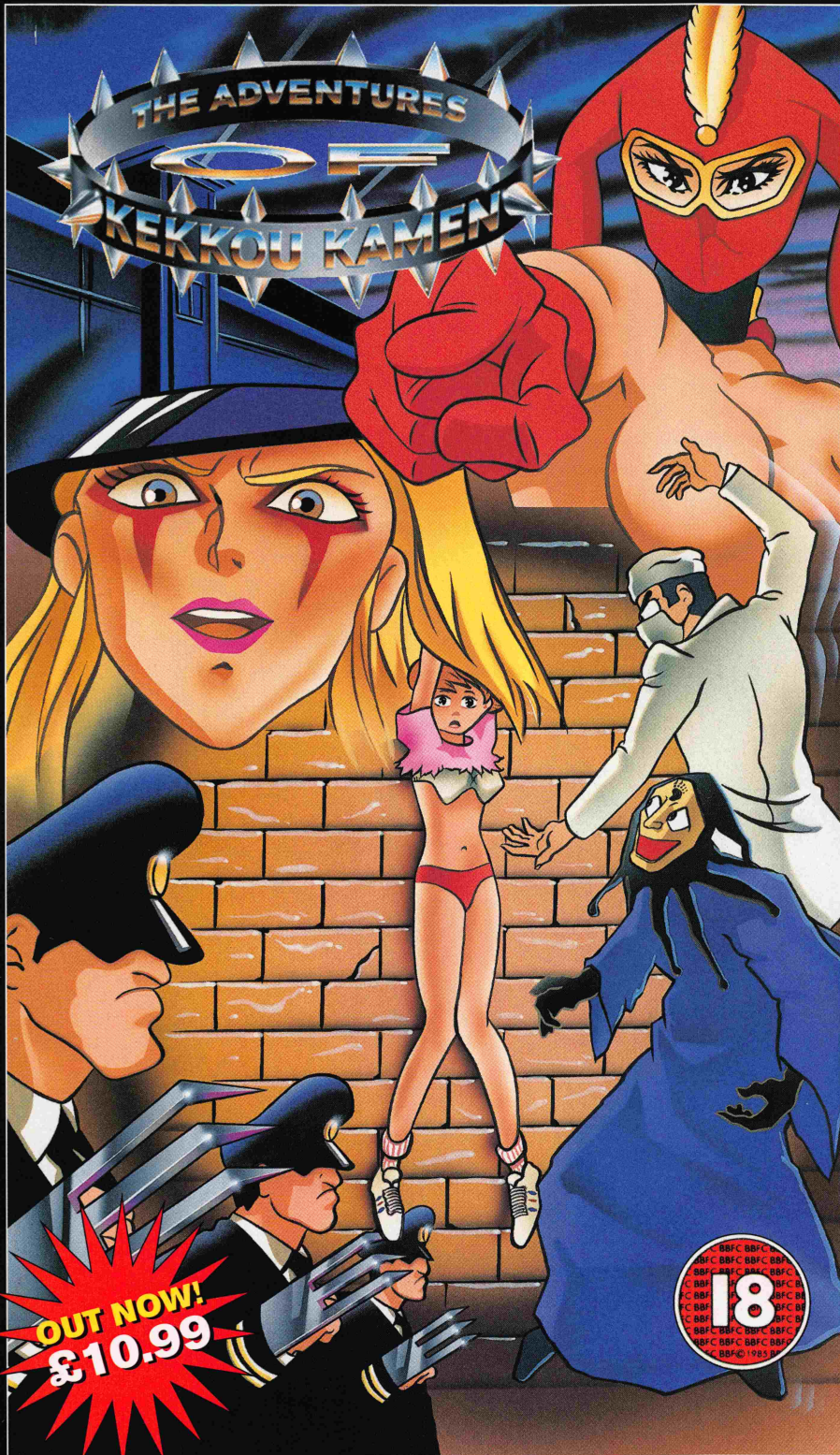
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR VOL 1-4, Cat no. SSLM-3001-4, list each \$24.95
LA BLUE GIRL VOL 1 (movies 1 & 2), Cat no. SSLM-3005, list \$24.95, **ADULTS ONLY**
LA BLUE GIRL VOL 2 (movies 3 & 4), Cat no. SSLM-3006, list \$24.95, **ADULTS ONLY**

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR is only available on NTSC and SECAM formats so far, so this release makes a subtitled version accessible to UK fans for the first time. In quite a different mode from the D & D deriding-do of the fantasy world of Lodoss, LA BLUE GIRL is an adults-only, uncensored erotic adventure in which ninja-in-training Miko Mido and her sister Miyu become targets for legions of sex-starved demon Shikima as a 600-year-old pact which kept the demons out of humanity's hair (mostly) crumbles. Miyu is abducted by the demons and Miko has to try and get her back ...

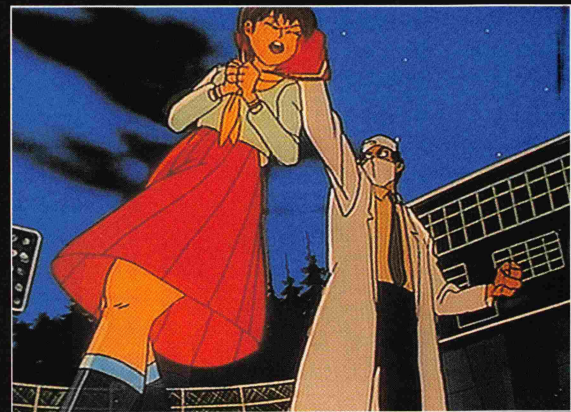
With many thanks to John Sirabella and Sam Liebowitz for their co-operation.



THE WAIT HAS BEEN WORTH IT!

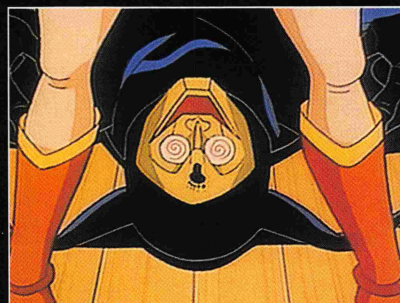


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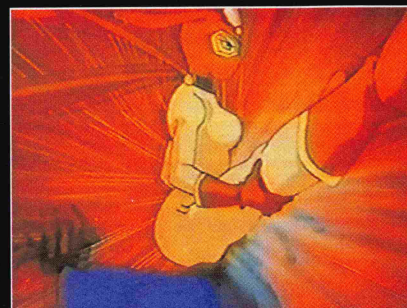
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源氏物語

THE TALE OF Genji





THE TALE OF GENJI

Central Park Media are releasing the anime version of the world's first novel. HELEN McCARTHY and JONATHAN CLEMENTS think it's an event to celebrate.

Most students of literature are aware of THE TALE OF GENJI - though not many have actually read it. And feminists everywhere should be aware that the earliest surviving novel was written by a highly educated, intelligent and reflective lady at the Japanese Imperial Court, for a similarly educated, intelligent and reflective audience of both men and women. But how many anime fans are aware that the director of STREET FIGHTER II had made a film based on that early novel?

SUGII AND MURASAKI : A DIRECTOR RE-INTERPRETS A CLASSIC

Gisaburo Sugii is a director of precise intelligence and considerable artistic courage. Many directors like to talk about the need to 'serve the text', that is, to convey the original author's intentions through their interpretation, but very few directors serve their texts as devotedly or as completely as this one. The

man who packed STREET FIGHTER II with action had already shown what he could do with a theme that required more reflection; NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD, a version of Kenji Miyazawa's novella, is packed with images of almost hallucinogenic beauty and mystery, and paced to suit the story, not the viewer. But filming THE TALE OF GENJI (already available in manga format from Waki Yamada, published by Kodansha) was an altogether bigger undertaking. The revered classic, one of Japan's artistic gifts to the world, written in archaic language, set in a mannered and highly evolved society, hugely admired but not necessarily understood, was to be presented to the speed-crazed, sensation-hungry, multi-cultural twentieth century through the very medium we developed to suit our short attention span and desire to be effortlessly seduced, as a series of moving pictures. Sugii's daring, and that of his producers, should not be underestimated. The film's success is a deserved reward.

Sugii has focussed on the central element of the book - the rivalry between three women for Genji's affection. It's a war fought subtly and cleverly, but without mercy. To

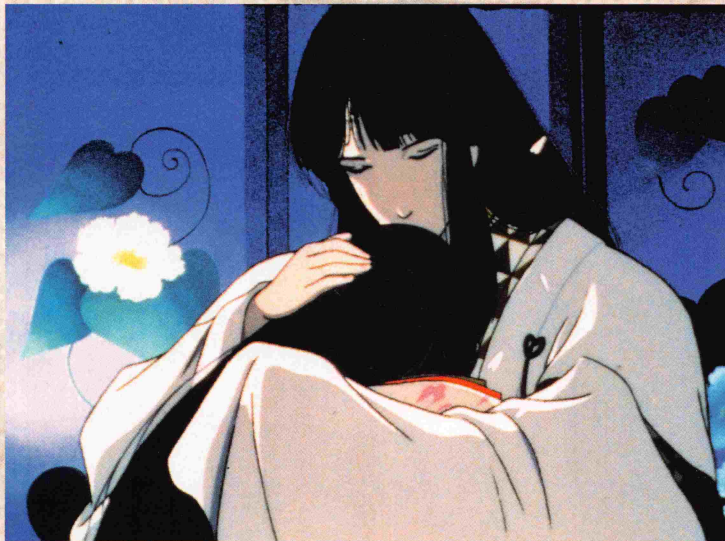
begin with, the lady Aoi, Genji's wife and the mother of his son, would seem to hold all the cards. But the lady Miyasudokoro, an icily determined bundle of nervous energy held firmly in check, will pay any price and commit any evil to hold her lover's attention. And Genji's own stepmother, the Emperor's wife, holds his heart in a way no other woman does. But all are competing with the ghost of his mother. In making this battle the heart of his film, Sugii has touched on something a modern audience can easily identify with; and by this means he defines the character of his leading man in very modern terms.

Genji is the most desirable man of his day, and our day's desires are not so different. He's very good-looking, wealthy, powerful and well-connected, with Royal blood. He is a great poet, dancer and archer. His wit and artistic sensibilities are famous. The character designs show a lean, dark, moody hunk - the very model of a modern-Gothic hero. Even Genji's philandering is shown in terms as sympathetic to the modern world as to his own. His life is rich and full, yet lacking in fulfillment. The claustrophobic atmosphere of the court, with its petty rivalries and backbiting, is magnifi-

cently conveyed. And throughout, we are made aware that Genji, while seeming to have everything the heart could desire, is -and feels himself to be - merely an object for the desires of others, valued not for himself but as some kind of trophy, to be won, displayed or downgraded, but never to be loved for himself alone. And he displays the same confusion in his own attitude to the women in his life, seemingly neglectful, yet racing frantically to reaffirm his love just when each is about to give up hope. The abiding sense of loss of the child torn from the arms of his dying mother is never far behind the poised facade of the Prince. Anything that reminds him of the fall of cherry blossoms brings that terrible loss to life again. And compared to that loss, nothing else matters. Everything can be risked, casually, because nothing is important.

Life in the Heian court was a fair-land for the very, very few who inhabited its splendours; yet there was a price to pay. Despite being the shining pinnacle of a feudal society most of whose members existed in precarious near-poverty, the courtiers lived with the constant threat of loss of influence and favour; they were prisoners in the





gilded cage of their social position, trapped in an enclosed, static society, marrying within their own caste, the very forces which protected them from the harsher reality of life also imprisoning them. Genji is the most important minister of government for a large part of the film; yet we never see him do anything that could be construed as governing, nor do we hear of anyone concerning themselves with life outside the court. The whole of his energy, of his lovers' energy, and of everyone around them, is expended on emotion and intrigue, either personal or political, and the film shows a vibrant and intensely capable man stifled in a hothouse of tension and boredom, a hero in search of true meaning in a world which offers him only artifice and emotion. No wonder this *TALE OF GENJI* is so accessible to a modern audience.

The psychological tensions of the piece are brilliantly played, and the storyboard has been designed frame by frame to enhance the effect. Sugii's daring is displayed in long scenes where the tiny figures of courtiers cross and recross long corridors in the middle distance, in a silence broken only by the rustle of their silken robes, and in lingering shots before mirrors as one or

another character paints on the face they have chosen for the next encounter. The sound of silk kimono moving slowly away has not been so brilliantly or effectively used since Kurosawa emphasised it in *THRONE OF BLOOD*. The soundtrack, too, is magnificent, a fusion of traditional and modern music which creates a whole world of atmosphere. The art is, of course, beautiful. Sugii has done all that can be asked of a director in re-interpreting a classic; he has stayed faithful to the spirit of the original, yet has given us a reading which allows us to relate directly and sympathetically to the characters. It's a brave and brilliant piece of work, and CPM have done the Western anime world a service by making it more widely available.

Helen McCarthy

THE TALE OF GENJI

c 1987 Asahi Group/Herald Group/TAC
English subtitles/packaging c 1995 Central Park Media
A joint production of Asahi Publishing Co., Asahi National Broadcasting Co. Ltd and Nippon Herald Films Inc.

DIRECTOR *Gisaburo Sugii*
PRODUCERS

Masato Hara, Atsumi Toshio
SCREENPLAY *Tomomi Tsutsul*
CHARA DESIGN *Yasuhira Nakura*
ANIME DIRECTOR *Yasuo Maeda*
ART DIRECTOR *Mihoko Magoori*
MUSIC COMPOSED BY

Haruomi Hosono
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION

John O'Donnell
PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION

Stephanie Shalofsky
ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Studio Phoenix

Cat No CPM 1333, ISBN 1056219-331-7 110 mins.

NOW READ THE BOOK!

Jonathan Clements presents a reader's view of The Tale of Genji

Our illustrious (indeed shining) editor has asked me to write about the relationship of the CPM release to the original novel, which is something of a thankless task because so few adaptations of literary classics ever compare favourably to their original inspiration. So I tender my apologies in advance to CPM, and begin by saying that I remain as

impressed as ever with their bravery in releasing such unorthodox works onto the English language market. The Tale of Genji is perhaps the most ambitious undertaking of all, since it is an anime on a par with the adaptation of Saikaku Ihara's *THE SENSUALIST*. It is as far removed from 'real', contemporary Japan as the *UROTSUKIDOJI* saga, but, of course, it is far more respectable.

Some viewers may find it hard to tell the characters apart; the 'classical' aspect of *GENJI* means there is no simple telegraphing of differences through such devices as differing hair colour. Murasaki's original rarely mentioned characters' names, and exactly which of the many titles should be used for a given character is a problem that has plagued the translator of every version of *GENJI* available in English. If the nomenclature of *GENJI* can confuse a viewer with access to several concordances and commentaries, think of the effect on someone used to *AKIRA* and *SAILOR MOON!*

In places, the modern 'versioning' of *GENJI* has turned it into more of a costume drama than a historical document. The most dissonant





scene is one in which Genji yawns several times, a common occurrence today, but one that would have him hounded out of polite society in mediaeval Japan. I do not recall this scene in the book, and Sugii's use of it in the film is either a directorial oversight or an editorial decision that warrants explanation.

Certain errors must, however, be blamed on the American end of the production. While the subtitling is mostly acceptable, there are a few conspicuous mistakes. For me, the most noticeable is when Genji reminisces about his mother's death. The translator appears to have misheard the line, or perhaps did not check the draft of the Japanese script against the visuals on-screen. Genji says "On the day my mother died, the cherry blossoms were in full bloom ..." or words to that effect, but the translator has written "On this day my mother died ..." It may seem like a minor glitch, but the autumn leaves floating past the balcony make it quite clear that spring has long gone, and the cherry blossoms with it. In the translator's defence, it is possible that he regards the presence of the falling leaves as a poetic metaphor rather than a physical event, but such an argument would have to be made in

liner notes, which the CPM release does not possess.

The GENJI film has been abridged out of obvious necessity, and excises over 50% of the original Japanese story. Murasaki's tale takes Genji's life up to middle-age, and after some bridging chapters of doubtful authorship, continues with ten chapters on the early life of his adopted son. While the film is a stunningly accurate adaptation of the 'spirit' of the original, much of the 'letter' has been removed.

Although the English script is, frankly, nothing to write home about, this is not the fault of CPM or their translators, Studio Phoenix. Anyone expecting a Shakespearean depth of language is apt to feel let down by subtitling. The translators have been hindered in their work by the original Japanese script, which bears little resemblance to the GENJI of old. Murasaki Shikibu's tale was written in an archaic form of Japanese, heavy with Chinese allusions and courtly language, to such an extent that it is virtually unintelligible, even to modern Japanese. The best parallel to draw for a Western audience is perhaps Chaucer, who requires 'translation' into modern English. The characters

in CPM's GENJI speak arcane, yet recognisably modern Japanese, and we can assume that the script was not based upon Murasaki's original, but on one of the modern Japanese 'translations' prepared by Junichiro Tanizaki or Fumiko Enchi. A truly brave effort would have been to use Murasaki's classical language and then to subtitle it in contemporary Japanese, a pedantic but rewarding task that has its precedent in Derek Jarman's SEBASTIANE, which was made in Latin with English subtitles. But such an effort would have alienated much of the potential audience, and indeed made an English version much more unlikely.

In the absence of liner notes or a bibliography from CPM, may I make a few suggestions for the viewer who is inspired to pursue THE TALE OF GENJI still further. There are two translations available in the West, by Arthur Waley (from Tuttle) and Edward Seidensticker (from Penguin). The Waley translation has a reputation for being rather 'free', and this is symptomatic of the translator's early work in Chinese poetry, which involves considerable padding of laconic verses. While Waley's translation is picturesque, it is generally considered to be less faithful than that of Seidensticker,

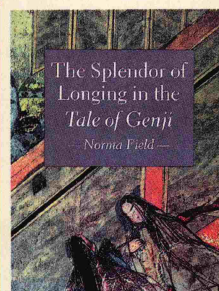
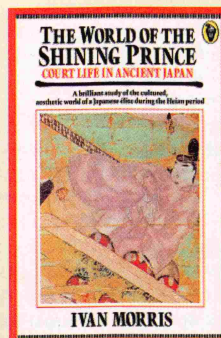
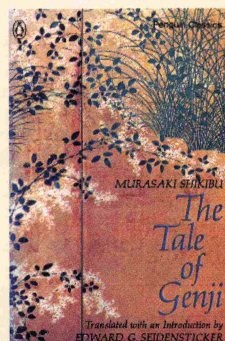
who deliberately set out to produce a complete version, and restored the chapters that Waley excised. Those who feel daunted by the task are directed to Ivan Morris' World Of The Shining Prince (Peregrine Books), which makes for very rewarding reading in conjunction with the CPM release. Morris even includes, for those confused by the many characters, detailed family trees of Genji's relationships, and an unequalled study of life in old Japan. Norma Field's Splendour of Longing in the Tale of Genji (Princeton University) concentrates on the love triangle at the heart of the novel, which makes it, conveniently, an in-depth companion to the central events of CPM's film release.

It may sound like a lot of effort to put in to watching a cartoon, but CPM's GENJI deserves a wider audience, and many of the anime-watching public will need some form of commentary to truly appreciate it. Having said that, the true value of GENJI does not lie in its relation to the original book at all, but in its position as one of the small canon of available anime that help to demonstrate the diversity of a medium that is better known in the West for its futuristic excesses.

THE TALE OF GENJI
ISBN 0 14
004.390 8

**THE WORLD OF THE
SHINING PRINCE**
ISBN 0 691
01436 1

**THE SPLENDOR OF
LONGING IN THE TALE
OF GENJI**
ISBN 0 14
055.083 6



SUPER SENTAI TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY REVIEW

TOEI'S TASK FORCE SERIES 1975-1995



HIMITSU SENTAI GORANGER



JAKGER DENGKI TAI



BATTLE FEVER J



DENSHI TEAM DENZIMAN



TAIYO SENTAI SUN VULCAN



DAI SENTAI GOGGLE V



KAGAKU SENTAI DYNAMAN



CHODENSHI BIOMAN



DENGKI SENTAI CHANGEMAN

For the past two decades Toei Co. has produced a string of half-hour live-action series based around the same premise; Earth is threatened by an alien force, and only the heroism of a team of young heroes, given special powers through a process of metamorphosis, can save humanity. The stories, characters and background - mythology, history, or even card games - change with each series but some elements are constant. The team usually includes at least one gentle yet heroic female character, although sometimes another female is included; one member is usually a rebel, perhaps a rival to the leader, who likes to go his own way regardless of what the team is doing. There is often a particularly powerful fighter, but he is not usually the team leader; the leader is a dynamic, inspiring yet co-operative character who uses his skills to get the others working as a unit. A father-figure or mentor-figure is generally the team commander and provides them with support and guidance, and they have special vehicles and a giant robot, but in the end it's teamwork and perseverance that saves the day.

Some of the shows are very jokey and humour can cross into slapstick territory; yet a few have been more serious and dramatic. Even the serious shows are not without their sense of fun; the names of the characters are often puns or jokes. Action is always a major feature, and the fighting skills of each character are enhanced by their metamorphosis, but its not fighting skill but teamwork that makes them effective fighters. For all their different skills, each team member is of equal importance. Characters come from all walks of life, in the past or present, but they are ordinary people, not superheroes. The message is that everyone can be a hero. It's all down to you and your own individual efforts.

Since 1980 Toei has produced a sentai show every year. Now the sentai craze has hit the West with the popularity of MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS, more and more of these shows are being

sought, not just by TV executives looking to edit them into Powerbrat clones, but by fantasy fans hooked on their action-packed insanity. Here's a short checklist, presented with acknowledgements and thanks to Doug Dlin of SENTAI magazine and Jim Cirronella of CLUB DAIKAI-JU, whose marvellous publications are essential reading for fans of Japanese live-action fantasy.

1975 HIMITSU SENTAI GORANGER Secret Taskforce Five Ranger

The Kuroju Jigun (Black Cross Military) oppose the heroes of the Eagle Japan Corps, whose strength is enhanced by the Goranger power suits. The Rangers' character names are the Japanese names for the colours of their outfits; AKARANGER (akai - red), AORANGER (aoi - blue), KIRANGER (kiro - yellow), MOMORANGER (momo - peachy-pink), and MIDORANGER (midori - green).

1977 JAKGER DENGKI TAI Jacker Power Attack Team

This time our heroes are cyborg warriors and the evil force is the international criminal organisation CRIME, led by Ironclaw. The team members are named for cards; Spade Ace possesses the power of atomic energy, Clover King the power of electricity, Daiya (or Diamond) Jack the power of magnetic force and Heart Queen the power of gravitational force. Team leader Big One has all four energies. Cardsharps will realise that the name and costume design motif symbolise the highest trump combination possible - Jack, Ace, King, Queen.

1979 BATTLE FEVER J

The Japanese National Defence Ministry gets involved in the battle against evil, secret society Egos; General Kurama recruits Battle Japan, Battle France, Battle Kenya, Battle Cossack (from Russia) and Miss America, who incorporate the national dances of their countries in their fight styles. America's, predictably, is disco. The first sentai

giant robot, the Battle Fever Robo, launched from their flying battleship the Battle Shark.

1980 DENSHI TEAM DENZIMAN Electronic Team Electroman

Three thousand years in the past the ruling family of Vader used their army to annihilate peaceful planet Denzi. Now Queen Hedorian of Vader plans to pollute and conquer Earth. A robot dog who survived the destruction of Denzi, I-C, selects five humans who by his planet's super-science are transformed into warriors of Denziman. Their giant robot Daidenjinn (Big Electronic God) flies into battle against Vader's monsters. Machiko Soga played Hedorian and created the definitive Toei sentai villainess; she is best known in the West as the face of Rita Repulsa in Power Rangers.

1981 TAIYO SENTAI SUN VULCAN Solar Task Force Sun Vulcan

The Earth Peace Defence Force is the organising body this time, as Commander Arashiyama forms the Sun Vulcan team to battle against the evil mechanical empire of Black Magma. Vul-Eagle commands the powers of the air, Vul-Shark the sea and Vul-Panther the land, and in their mighty Sun Vulcan Robo they take on Hedorian, reborn with an artificial heart, and Black Magma's mechanical warriors.

1982 DAI SENTAI GOGGLE V Great Taskforce Goggle Five

Professor Hongo of the Future Science Research Institute chooses five brave individuals to fight the dark science empire of Deathdark, with its synthetic monsters and evil overlord Taboo. A band of cute computer-genius kids back up the team and their transforming battle mecha which combine to form the Goggle Robo.

1983 KAGAKU SENTAI DYNAMAN Science Task Force Dynaman

Ancient Earth was hit by a meteor which sparked the evolution of the evil Jashinka Empire, and underground race with tails. Emperor

Aton is top dog - he has nine tails - and schemes to conquer the surface peoples. Professor Yumeno of Yumeno Invention Centre, a secret research facility concealed in a childrens' playground (yes, more cute kids), brings five young scientists together as Dynaman. Three battle machines launched from the Dyna Jupiter ship can combine to form Dyna Robo and fight the empire's shinka-ju, or evolutionary monsters.

1984
CHODENSHI BIOMAN
Super Electric Bioman

Doctorman, cyborg boss of mechanical empire Gear plans to conquer Earth, but Peebo, a mechanical entity from planet Bio, recruits five warriors and gives them the power of bio-particle energy and the giant Bio Robo to help in the battle. Early in the series, one of the team, photographer Mika Koizumi, Bioman Yellow Four, is killed and replaced.

1985
DENGEKI SENTAI CHANGEMAN
Power Attack Team Changerman

The star group Gozma invades, and Earth sends five members of the Earth Defence Force, powered by mysterious Earth Force energy, to defend the world. As CHANGEMAN, they use densetsu-ju (legendary beast power) to become Change Dragon, Change Griffon, Change Pegasus, Change Mermaid and Change Phoenix and pilot the Change Robo against the uchu-jushi (space beast warriors).

1986
CHOSHINSEI FLASHMAN
Super New Star Flashman

Five children, kidnapped by aliens from earth, are rescued and adopted by the people of the planet Flash. They eventually inherit the powers of their foster parents and return to Earth with their robot friend Mag to fight the Mesu empire, who are involved in surgical experimentation and monster-making (mesu means scalpel). This series features three giant robots, as the popularity of the theme and marketability of the toys grew.

1987
HIKARI SENTAI MASKMAN
Aura Taskforce Maskman

The underground empire Choob (from the centre of the earth - chubu is Japanese for centre) attacks the surface and Commander Sugata chooses five young people and trains them to release the aura energy which lies within everybody. As the Maskman team, they defend the surface folk using this natural power.

1988
CHOZUYU SENTAI LIVEMAN
Super Beast Team Liveman

The forces of Balt attack Earth from space, using super-intelligence technology and an army of 'intelligence monsters'. Professor Hoshi, director

of Science Academia, invents a group of giant battle mecha to fight them. Following the killing of two young people by Balt, their older siblings and three friends join forces as the Liveman team to operate the mecha. Liveman's Land Lion was the first of the hugely successful transforming animal mecha in a sentai show.

1989
KOSOKU SENTAI TURBORANGER
High Speed Taskforce Turboranger

The pollution of present-day Earth causes the rebirth of the long-dead and malevolent Boma Hyakuzoku (Violent Evil Generation). But Shiron, last survivor of the Yosei Zoku (Fairy People) which defeated the Boma 20,000 years ago, gives the power of superspeed to five high school students, and helped by their mentor Prof. Dazai's special weapons and giant robots they become Turboranger. The Super Turbo Robo can combine with their secret base to become the Turbobuilder, a virtually invincible battle mecha.

1990
CHIKYU SENTAI FIVEMAN
Earth Taskforce Fiveman

The five children of Professor and Mrs Hoshikawa were saved by their parents from an attack by the Zone Empire when exploring the planet Shidon. Now grown up, they increase their strength to five times normal by using the fivetector power armour, and aided by their robot Arthur G-6, they fight the Zone Empire's attacks on Earth. They are the first family sentai team.

1991
CHOJIN SENTAI JETMAN
Birdman Task Force Jetman

The Birdnic Wave gives those exposed to it a 100 fold increase in strength; this is Sky Force's top-secret 'J Project'. While officer Ryu Tendo is undergoing the process on the Force's space station, the dimensional war delegation Byram commences their plan to conquer Earth by materialising in planetary orbit. The space station is destroyed and the Birdnic Wave distorts in the atmosphere and strikes four very different individuals on Earth, endowing them with super powers. Commander Odagiri and Ryu, now Jetman leader Red Hawk, must assemble the team into a fighting unit to battle Byram and their dimension monsters.

1992
KYORYU SENTAI ZYURANGER
Dinosaur Taskforce Beast Ranger

Planet Nemesis drifts into Earth's solar system, and the astronauts sent to explore it accidentally free the evil Bandora and her henchmen from their imprisonment to once more attack mankind. Sorcerer

Barza, who has secretly guarded Earth for centuries, awakens five warriors of the ancient dinosaur clans of Japan from their 170 million years in suspended animation to defend Earth as the Zyuranger team. Dinosaur-styled mecha and giant robot warriors combined with fast action sequences were retained when the show was edited for US release as MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS. Machiko Soga's unforgettable Bandora was renamed Rita Repulsa. The rest is history ...

1993
GOSEI SENTAI DAIRANGER
Five Star Soldiers Era Ranger

6,000 years have passed since the evil Goma fought the peaceful Daos until both sides perished. Master Kaku fears the Goma Empire's rebirth and gathers five young descendants of Daos to learn to master their inner spiritual energy and become the Dairanger team. Dai here refers to the passing of powers from one generation to the next. Two new members join the team as well, a 10 year old boy named Ko, who is almost overwhelmed by Goma before he gains control of his own powers, and gentle Kameo, who transforms into a giant turtle mecha. DAIRANGER was edited into later episodes of POWER RANGERS.

1994
NINJA SENTAI KAKURANGER
Ninja Task Force Hidden Ranger

400 years ago five ninja imprisoned all the world's demonic spirits. Since then, mankind's own evil has weakened the spiritual seal and released the evil forces back into the world. Five young people use the ancient ninja arts to become Kakuranger and fight the phantoms and monsters which now terrorise mankind, and their leader, Daimaoh, the Great Demon King. In the course of the series the team could call on no less than 20 giant mecha, the physical manifestations of ancient beast gods.

1995
CHORIKU SENTAI OHRANGER
Super Power Taskforce King Ranger

It's 1999. The mechanical empire Baranoia invades Earth with machine monsters (machine-ju) and assault fighter-walkers (takonpa, a reference to the legs they sprout - tako is octopus in Japanese). Five members of United Airforce division U. A. O. H. gain mysterious powers from the advanced technology of 600 million year old relics buried deep beneath their secret Alpine base; these channel Earth's energy to create TH (tetrahedral) energy and power the team known as Ohranger.

SENTAI magazine is available from good comic shops, published by ANTARCTIC PRESS. For details of CLUB DAIKAIJU (Big Monster Club!), write to James Cirronella, PO Box 1614, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, USA.



CHOSHINSEI FLASHMAN



HIKARI SENTAI MASKMAN



SHOZUYU SENTAI LIVEMAN



KOSOKU SENTAI TURBORANGER



SHIKYU SENTAI FIVEMAN



CHOJIN SENTAI JETMAN



NINJA SENTAI KAKURANGER



CHORIKU SENTAI OHRANGER

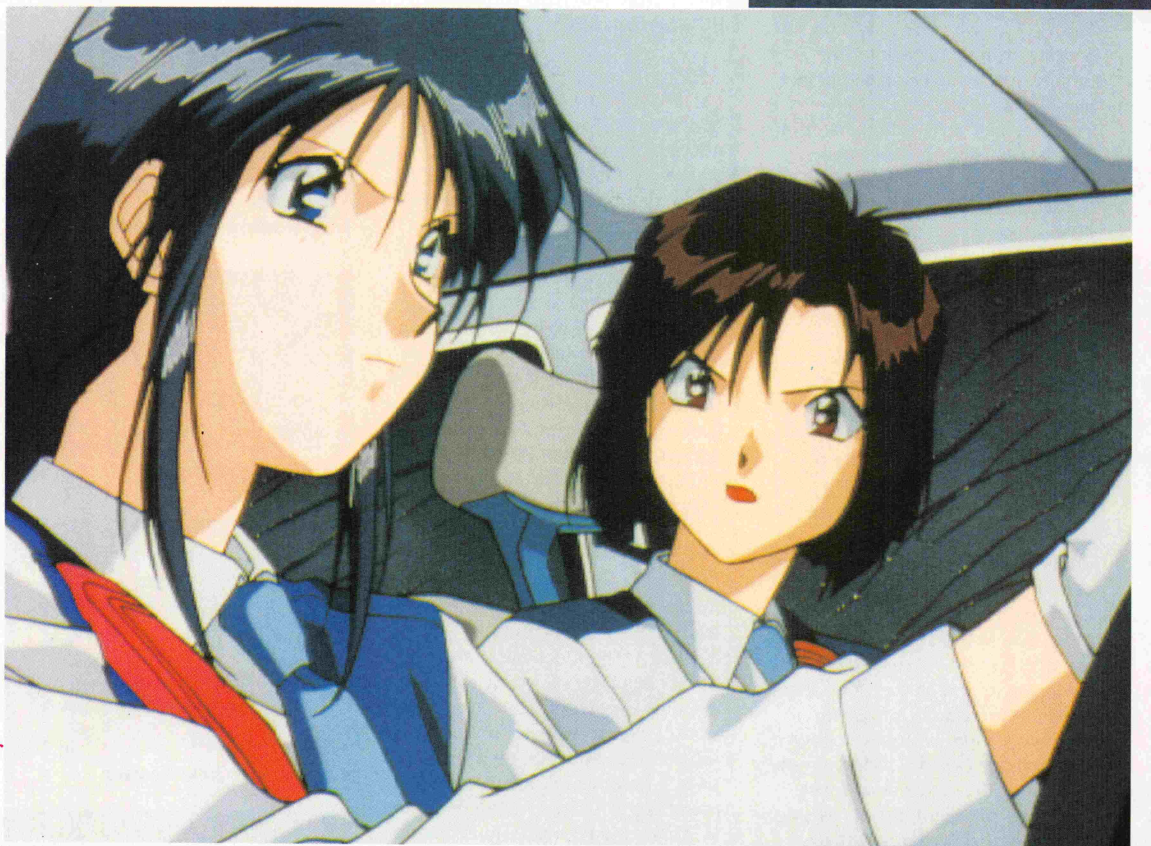


逮捕しちゃうぞ

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST

TAIHO SHICHAUZO FILE UPDATE

Waaaaay back in December 1994 we gave you the lowdown on the very first episode of this sensational OVA series created by Kosuke Fujishima, who is also the originator of AAA MEGAMISAMA, available in the West on video from AnimEigo and Anime Projects, and in translated manga form from Dark Horse, as OH! MY GODDESS. The folks at AnimEigo are real Fujishima fans, and now they're bringing TAIHO SHICHAUZO to the West as well, under the title YOU'RE UNDER ARREST. The video is available in the USA now. SAKURA STUDIO's God of Cute Peter Evans brings you up to date on the events in episode 2, with beautiful pictures courtesy of Kodansha and Bandai Visual.

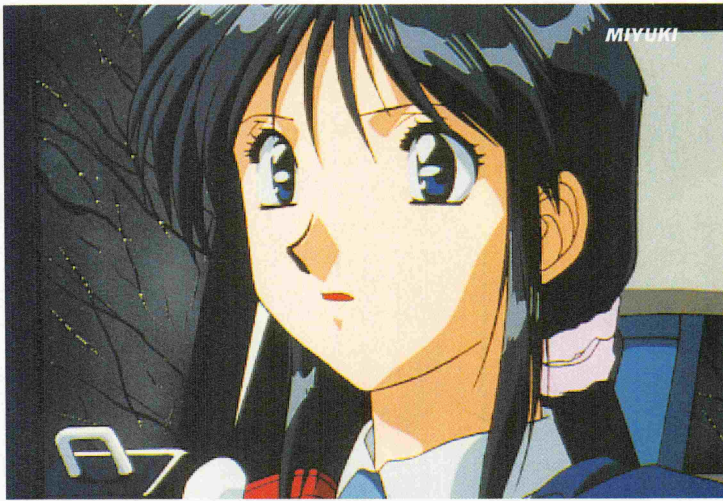


TAIHO SHICHAUZO CAST & CREW

Director	Kazuhiro Furuhashi
Chara design	Atsuko Nakajima
Original story by	Kosuke Fujishima
Miyuki Kobayakawa	Akiko Hiramatsu
Natsumi Tsujimoto	Sakiko Tamagawa
Nakajima	Bin Shimada
Kacho	Issei Masamune
Yoriko	Etsuko Kozakura







FILE 2 - TOKYO TYPHOON

STORY SYNOPSIS

The biggest typhoon in memory is about to hit Tokyo. Already the storm is making itself felt; the police are driving around telling people to go home and batten down the hatches. Natsumi and Miyuki are driving past the Wakabaya Yochien (kindergarten) when they see a large group of children outside. Natsumi tells them to hurry up and go home as there is a great big scary typhoon coming.

Stopping the car and getting out, they are surrounded by the children. One of the boys asks Miyuki if she knows where there is an animal hospital, but she doesn't. One of the girls is holding a cat in her school hat; Natsumi recognises it as the one she narrowly avoided running over on her first day in the department, back in episode 1. The children say the cat is a stray and isn't well, which is why they want to take it to the vet's.

Suddenly they hear a motorbike and rush around shouting "Ken-chan!" It's Nakajima (their colleague, a motorcycle cop). Natsumi is surprised at this and grins slyly at Miyuki, who is blushing! When Nakajima picks up the cat by the scruff of the neck to look at it, Miyuki takes it and tells him off for being rough with the poor thing. Natsumi promises the children they will look after the cat, and tells them to hurry home before the storm hits.

A mysterious yellow car (a Lancia Delta Integrale) suddenly runs the lights near the Yochien and races past at high speed. Natsumi hurriedly moves the children off the

road and yells after the maniac driver; Nakajima protects Miyuki. After the car has gone, he recognises it as 'the legendary speeder that only comes out in the worst of a storm'. Then Miyuki wonders why he is holding her so close, while Natsumi and the children cheer them! This makes Nakajima very embarrassed and he tries to sneak off; Miyuki can't bear to watch him make a fool of himself.

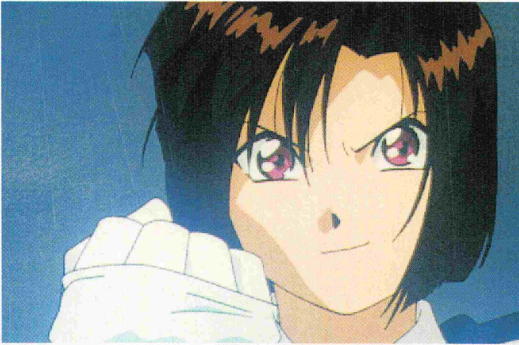
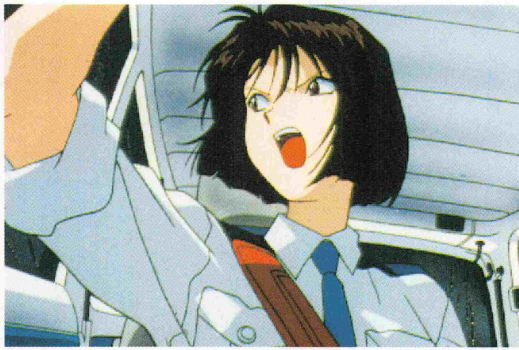
At Headquarters, as they park in the underground car park, Natsumi is teasing Miyuki about what a wonderful pair she and Nakajima make, much to her partner's irritation. And when their colleague Yoriko bounces round the corner and asks if Miyuki knows what put Nakajima in such a wierd mood, she storms off in a huff. Yoriko immediately turns to Natsumi "I though so! There's something going on there, isn't there?" Natsumi starts telling tales ...

The pair spy on Miyuki putting the cat in a box with a warm blanket as the rain starts. She realises it's not ill, but pregnant, and as the other two emerge Nakajima asks Miyuki to come with him - he has something very important to tell her. The two conspirators hope for a proposal and sneak after them but the noise of the rain outside the workshop prevents their eavesdropping. In the event, though, Nakajima just wants Miyuki to fix his bike. She agrees to have a look, since she is good with machines, and with Yoriko and Natsumi to help, she practically rebuilds it.

Elsewhere in the city, the yellow car







lurks in the rain until it comes to a red light; then it races through and causes an accident as a small truck swerves to avoid it and overturns. Natsumi and Miyuki rush off to investigate, leaving Yoriko to call an ambulance and look after the cat. Nakajima puts on his rain clothes and sets out into the storm.

The ambulance is delayed and the driver of the truck is unconscious in his cab when the two women arrive. Natsumi tries to open the door, but as it is locked, she only rips the handle off. Wrapping a handkerchief around her fist for the "Diamond Knuckle Attack!", she puts her fist through the windscreen! The driver is safely taken away in the ambulance and the police clear up the mess. When they have finished, Miyuki tells Natsumi about the cause of the accident, the yellow car that only comes out every year in the strongest of typhoons. Nakajima is obsessed with catching it, but riding a motorbike in the middle of a typhoon is very dangerous and Miyuki is worried about him.

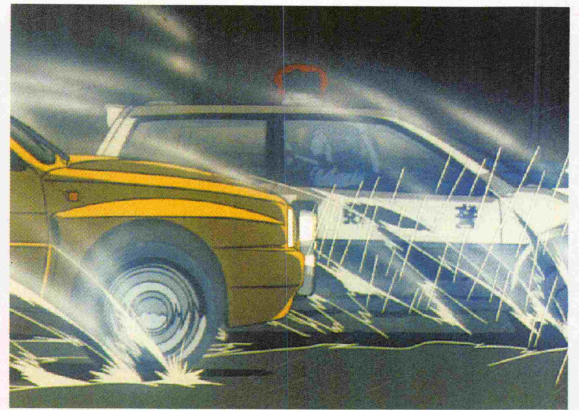
Then Yoriko calls them on the radio, asking them to hurry back. The cat won't eat, get up or do anything at all and she doesn't know what is wrong with it. They decide to take it to the vet's. Yoriko gives directions over the radio as the mini-patrol car rushes through the streets. Elsewhere, Nakajima hears them on his helmet radio and wonders what they are doing. Then the typhoon blows down a large tree, which lands on a major substation and blacks out the entire district, even the police station.

This is just what the Lancia driver was hoping for, and, laughing like a maniac, he races along silent roads and through darkened junctions.

Natsumi and Miyuki arrive at the vet's, but after examining the cat by torchlight he says his little animal hospital doesn't have the equipment needed to help the animal. He gives them another name and address and they set off deciding to take the Shuto Expressway, even though it is very exposed. Yoriko thinks they are insane to take such a risk, but Miyuki is confident. Moving the barriers at the toll-gate, they race along the deserted road in terrible visibility. Natsumi talks to the cat, telling it everything will be all right soon, but then Miyuki notices they are being followed. By the yellow Lancia! (This bit is so well animated you would swear it was real! As car chases go, this takes the biscuit!)

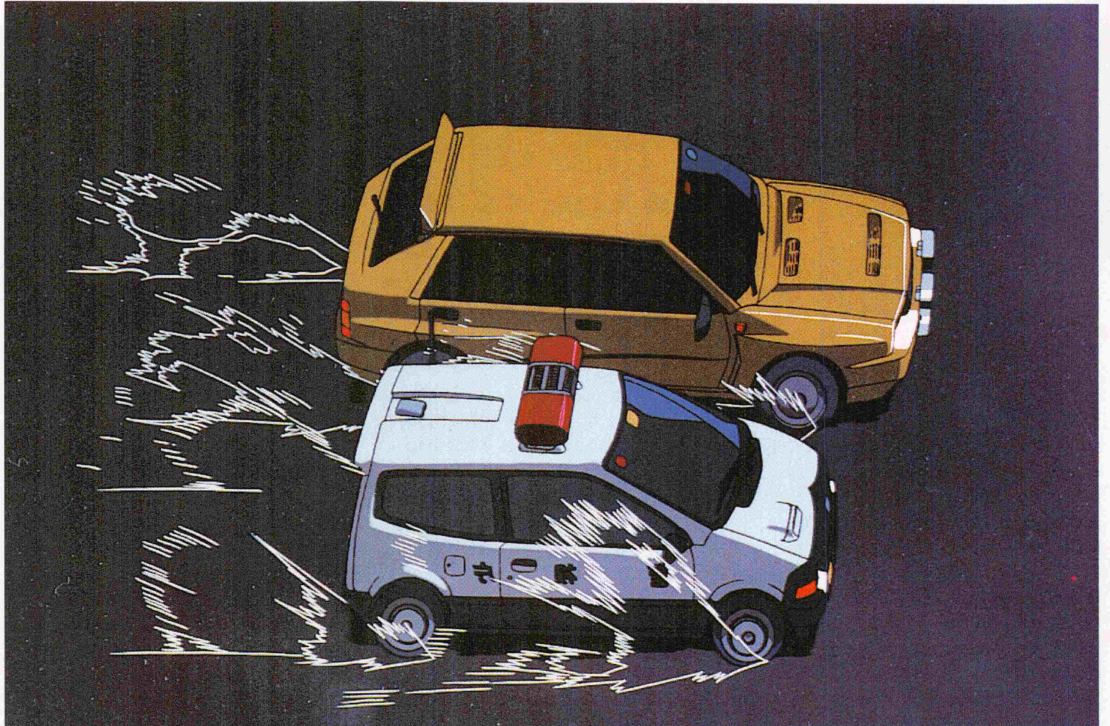


The yellow car nearly forces them into the concrete barrier, causing them to miss the exit they needed. The driver is really dangerous and is trying to cause an accident!



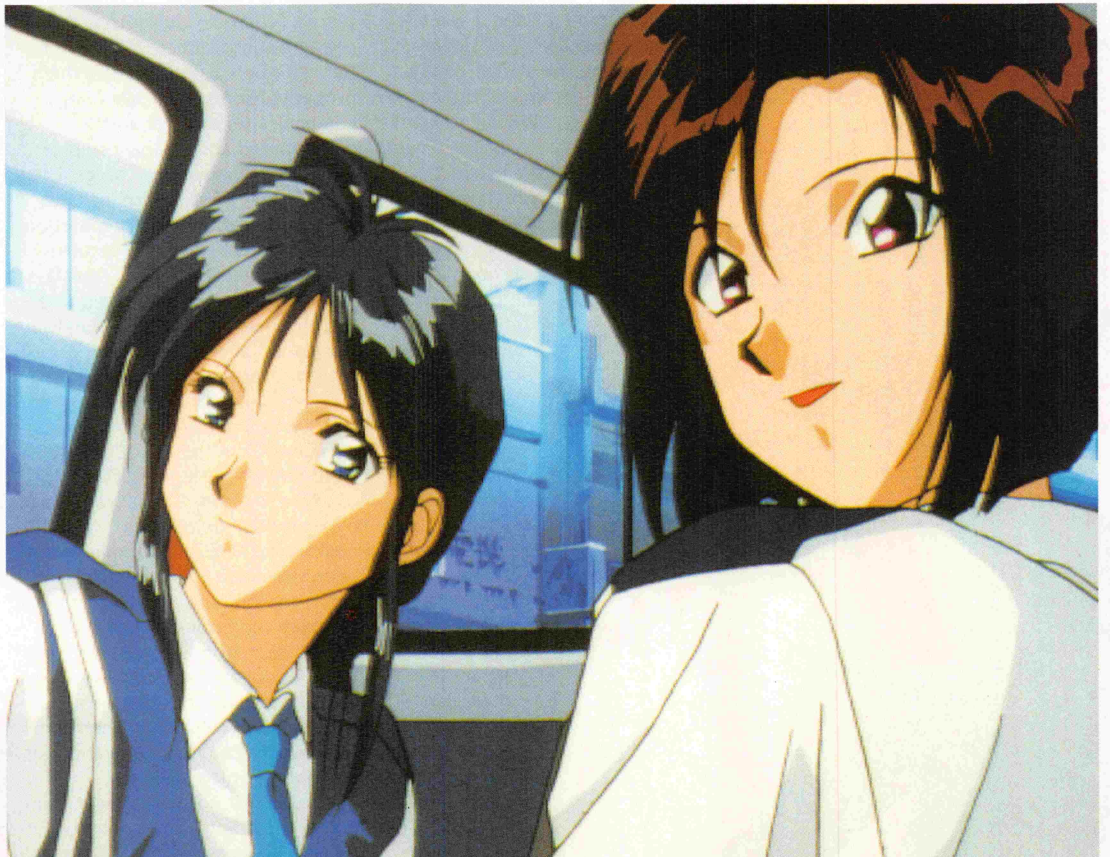
Nakajima calls them on the radio and suddenly appears in front of the yellow car, and all three vehicles - his bike, the mini-pato (Japlish term for mini-patrol car) and the Lancia - charge along the expressway at high speed. Miyuki is worried for Ken-chan - riding a bike in this weather is very dangerous, especially in front of a homicidal maniac. But he tells her not to worry, he will be all right; after all, this car is "tuned by Kobayakawa".

Ken-chan leads the yellow car on and the women are able to take an exit. Natsumi teases Miyuki about "Ken-chan" (Note that Japanese girls sometimes call their boyfriends "-chan"!) All over the city, trains and traffic have ground to a halt due to flooding. They are close to the animal hospital when they find that the road is completely flooded. Using the onboard computer, they find that all the other crossings will be flooded by the swollen river.



Nakajima and the yellow Lancia are fighting, as the car driver tries to crash Nakajima's bike! The car is too close and too obsessed with ramming the bike to notice the sharp curve until it is too late. When everything stops spinning, the driver staggers out of his car. Nakajima happily tells him he is busted!

Meanwhile, having found no other crossing, it's time for Natsumi and her moto-compo to go into action. Putting the cat in her backpack, she rides on the railing to cross the flooded road and get to the animal hospital. Miyuki has to go the long way around. She gets there just in time to hear the sound of kittens mewling ...



The following sunny day, the children run out of the yochien to find the mini-pato parked near the pavement, with two sleeping police-women and a basket inside. It is the cat and kittens! They stick lots of cute thank-you notes on the car for the girls to read when they wake.

Natsumi complains that the notes won't come off! It will take ages to get their car clean!

To be continued ...

JAPAN ROCKS

SPECIAL

FLYING BLIND

JONATHAN CLEMENTS

on the sound of the Land of the Rising Sun

In this month's issue of JAPAN ROCKS, we'll be looking at anime song translation. There are normally at least two songs on any given project; the OP (opening) and the ED (ending) tracks. These tend to have little to do with the content of the anime itself, although they're likely to be sung by at least one of the stars. Back in the TV days they would probably be wiped and replaced with something more acceptable in English. This has happened on a few Manga Entertainment releases too, and the rationale is the same. If an anime is not being sold on account of its 'Japanese-

ness', then a production company might decide to remove something a little too 'foreign'. But what happens if a production company doesn't have the facilities to re-record a soundtrack, or if the producer feels that the original Japanese songs should be retained?

As a translator, I'm always keen to see original songs staying on an anime release, especially since the OP and ED in many releases often occupy over 5% of the total running time. If I pay to see and understand a video, I want to understand all of it. However, song translation remains

one of the most difficult parts of any anime. From the production company's point of view it's often irrelevant and uneconomical. The translator is paid to produce a script; peripherals such as cast, credits or song lyrics are not included in the contract. Nor are they included in the package that normally arrives from the Japanese producers. Of the thirty anime productions on which I have worked, only one has ever

included song translation in the contract, and supplied me with a lyric sheet. On all other occasions I've been flying blind, working against the clock to hammer out a song that rhymes by watching the tape over and over again, sometimes in the few minutes that elapse before the master goes off to be subtitled.

But there are other difficulties facing a song translator. Sometimes there's little point in thrashing out rhyming subtitles because the subtitler can't be trusted to place them properly. Professional subtitling companies tend to get a little embarrassed about Japanese productions, because they charge a flat fee for their work, which includes translation, editing and preparation of the master. However, because they don't have Japanese translation facilities, they are forced to ask the producer to provide an English translation anyway, and tend to be a bit over-zealous in their editing in order to demonstrate that the producer is still getting his or her money's worth. On the KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS production, for example, my song script was altered by a subtitler trying to prove he could write English grammar, who hadn't stopped to wonder if there was a reason for all the superfluous syllables and strange word orders. We all learn from our mistakes, and these days I always include instructions to the subtitler that he's looking at a song, which has been carefully constructed to rhyme and scan, and not just plain dialogue. The translator normally works from a VHS copy. Sometimes sound quality isn't up to much, but you can

always double-check by looking at the Japanese script. But, as I said before, the song won't be in the script, so if you can't hear something distinctly, you have to guess. This can be infuriating, and you have to know where to draw the line. In the past, I have refused point-blank to do a particular song, because I wasn't prepared to risk guessing the entire thing. On other occasions, you think you've got away with it until the tape is finally released in the shops, duplicated from a pristine master copy. Then, and only then, the correct lyrics come leaping out at you and you realise that you've got the entire line wrong.

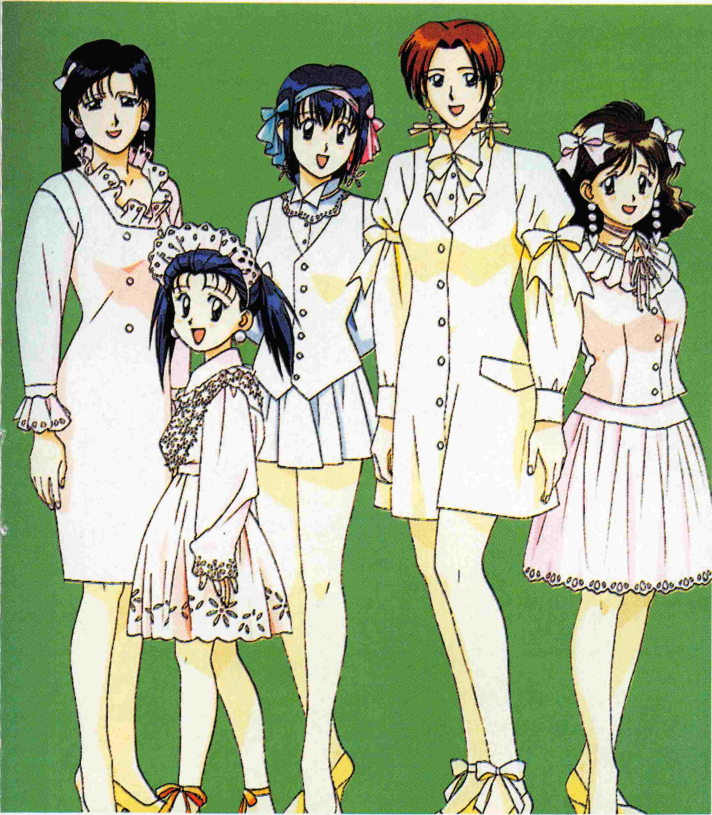
Sometimes the viewer can pay the price if the translator is given a bad quality tape. 'Rainbow Forces', the ED from HUMMINGBIRDS, had to be cut during mastering for the UK version, mainly because I'd been given a mono copy to work from, which only contained half the words!

But the biggest problem has to be making the lyrics rhyme in English, without losing the original sense of the Japanese. There are no official guidelines on just how much a song can be altered; once again, the translator is flying blind. Sometimes, it is necessary to switch the order of lines, especially in Japanese, where meaning sometimes rests on a verb at the end of a verse. English-speakers are used to getting their verbs much earlier on, and have to be accommodated. There are always difficulties where puns are involved; a translator might be able to translate one of



Idol Hummingbirds





Anime Hummingbirds

the meanings, and occasionally even find an English word that is close to two, but what about DRAGON HALF where many lines have triple-jokes? Sometimes something has to give way, and one can only pray for liner notes.

DANCOUGAR : REWRITING FOR SCANSION

The following song turns up in the concert scene in DANCOUGAR, the UK release of GOD BLESS DANCOUGAR (Western Connection). Printed in red are the song lyrics as they were rewritten to fit with the beat of the music. In blue is the direct translation, before any rewrite had occurred. Here we see a major problem for song translators; what if the original song becomes either too small or too large to fit the music once it is translated? That's when the rewriter's job really becomes both risky and important.

Note how the 13th and 14th lines of the final version differ significantly from the original meaning. This sort of thing can happen quite regularly when working against deadlines. The fifth line was complete guesswork, but likely to be close to the actual words. The words 'wrapped within your loving arms' are a translation of what the singer 'means', rather than what he actually 'says'.

Through the storm of battle, my
clothes are dripping wet,
Now I need my baby to help me to

forget
Now all I'm wanting is to be sleeping
Wrapped within your loving arms
Please believe me when I tell you
I promise they won't see you fall
I will protect you, I will lay down my life
I'm a foolish fighter after all
Night falls so quickly on the town,
and on us
But we're together at last
And I don't want to see your sweet smile
Turn to sadness once again
Tell me that you love me, and every-
thing is fine
I only have to hear it, and I can
make you mine
My heart is burning
Lost in its yearning
Wrapped within your loving arms

I am all wet
I was in the storm of war
I just want to sleep now
in your arms/chest/embrace
[unclear on tape]
I will guard you
risking my life
Man is such a foolish warrior
A giant shadow is sneaking up
Over the city
I don't want to see your
sad smiling face anymore
I will turn into the beast again
tonight
without telling you about
my burning heart
I want to tell you
in your arms/chest/embrace

HUMMINGBIRDS : THE LOST SONG

For those of you who wanted to

know what was missing from HUMMINGBIRDS, here is the song that had to be cut, with the original translation in blue. In this case, the translation worked 'outwards' from the chorus, which needed little rewriting from one language to another, and therefore helped set the tone for the rest of the song.

A sudden breeze of springtime
Blows all around and up my skirt
But I'm in the clouds, and still I'm
flying
And no-one can see me if I flirt
I've got a flying suit that matches
yours
And I will get you back
I'll lure you high into the sky above
And then lock on, so prepare for my
love attack
Rainbow Forces! Look at the ground
Rainbow Forces! Spinning around
Everything's beautiful
Rainbow Forces! All of the time
Rainbow Forces! Say you'll be mine
And tell me that you'll always love
me
A sudden breeze of springtime
Ripples oh-do-gently through my
hair
At 5000 feet I say I love you
And then look around, are you
there?
Let's fly away where we can be
alone
... on wings
... to be with you
Make a Rainbow Formation!
Rainbow Forces! Look out tonight
Rainbow Forces! Future is bright
Wonderful with you

Rainbow Forces! Please show me
how
Rainbow Forces! Kiss me now
And tell me that you love me
Wonderful with you
Rainbow Forces! Please show me
how
Rainbow Forces! Kiss me now
And tell me that you love me

The sudden spring wind
blows up my skirt
but I'm above the clouds
no-one is watching me
this pilot suit I'm wearing
is the same as yours
I'll lure you into the sky
and attack you with love
Rainbow Forces! [unclear on tape]
Rainbow Forces! The World!
So beautiful
Rainbow Forces! All of the time
Rainbow Forces! Say you'll be mine
And tell me that you'll always love
me
The sudden spring wind
blows gently on my hair
in the sky 5000 feet up
I confess I love you
let's take off the ground
[Satsuki bursts into tears at this
point, hence the broken lines]
Make a Rainbow Formation!
Rainbow Forces! Look out tonight
Rainbow Forces! The Future!
So wonderful
Rainbow Forces! Be nice!
Rainbow Forces! Kiss me!
And tell me that you love me
So wonderful
Rainbow Forces! Be nice!
Rainbow Forces! Kiss me!
And tell me that you love me.

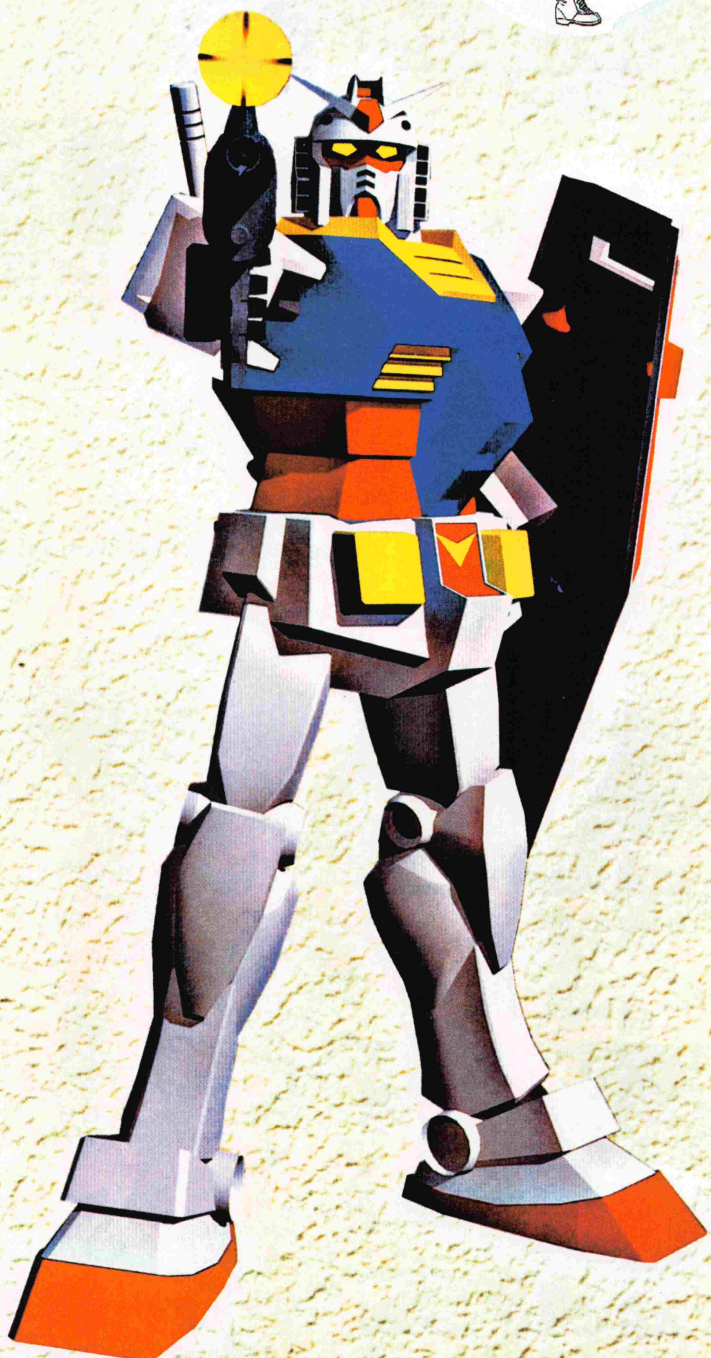
Left: Dancougar
Below: KO Century Beast Warriors





GAMES CAPSULE

by Paul Watson



BANDAI'S GUNDAM

COMING SOON TO A TV NEAR YOU?

As we have mentioned in these pages, the Sony Playstation is one of the new 32bit CD Rom Consoles coming to the west soon. Now the Saturn is available in the UK, everybody is looking towards the second contender in the next generation market to see how well it takes off. Launched in Japan last December, over 100,000

units were sold on the first day with another 400,000 being purchased over the following three months! Despite constant moaning about the long stop-gaps between Japanese and English hardware releases, one benefit we have over our Japanese gameplaying friends is the larger amount of quality software available at the time of launch. As can be expected, not all games released in Japan for this dream machine have been amazing with some being "Too Japanese" while others have been all graphics and no gameplay! Needless to say, by the time we eventually get to see the product on the shelves here, there will be a greater selection of quality titles to choose from. Anyway, we've been lucky enough to be fooling around on the playstation for a short while now and here's what we discovered.



PLAYSTATION SPECIFICATIONS

How powerful is Sony's baby? Have a look at these:

CPU

R3000A 32bit RISC chip @ 33MHz
Clearing capacity: 30 MIPS
Bus bandwidth: 132 Mb/sec

3D GEOMETRY ENGINE

(High speed matrix calculator)
Clearing capacity: 66 MIPS
1.5 million flat-shaded polygons/sec
500,000 texture mapped and light-sourced polygons/sec

DATA ENGINE

Clearing capacity: 80 MIPS
CPU, direct bus connection
Compatible with JPEG, MPEG1, H.261 files

SOUND

ADPCM, 24 channels
Sampling frequency 44.1Hz

GRAPHICS

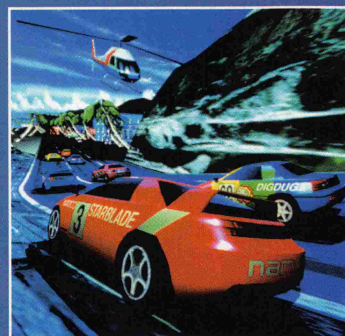
16.7 million colours
Resolution: 256x224-640x480

Sprite/BG drawing
Adjustable frame buffer
No line restriction
Unlimited CLUTS
4,000 8x8 pixel sprites with individual scaling and rotation
Simultaneous backgrounds
360,000 polygons/sec

MEMORY

Main RAM: 16 Mbits
VRAM: 8 Mbits
Sound RAM: 4 Mbits
CD-ROM buffer: 256K
Operating System ROM: 4 Mbits
RAM cards for data save

Well that's what lies inside the casing, but what about the software? Here's a brief look at some of the currently available releases:



RIDGE RACER - NAMCO

One of the first releases for Sony's baby and something that will really make gamers' heads turn. Ridge Racer is Namco's conversion of their highly successful racing coin-op. Featuring stunning graphics, sound and playability this game will be one of the top sellers around the machines release date (That is if Sony aren't really nice to you all and include it in the pack). The one gripe on this game is the fact that the game only really has one track, with some extra curves thrown in on the harder settings. Although you do get to race around the other way on a successful completion of the four races available. Overall though this is a quality title and should sell the machine well.

TOSHINDEN - TAKARA

Inevitably, the beat em up was bound to make an appearance sooner or later and luckily for us it did. Toshinden will dazzle the senses with its 3D polygon graphics and fluid gameplay accompanied by a thumping soundtrack. Taking the Streetfighter genre into new dimensions with the ability to roll in and out of the screen, Toshinden is a quality product that, considering the machine is still in its infancy, spells promising things for the future. Fighting game black belts may mock the fairly easy one player game, but the game packs enough in the way of visual style to come out on top. This will sell by the bucketload.

TEKKEN - NAMCO

Hot on the heels of Toh Shin Den comes Namco's Tekken. A fighting game in the Virtua Fighter vein, Tekken features some incredible graphics for a home system. Namco used Playstation hardware in the creation of the arcade machine and this has allowed for an almost perfect conversion of the coin-op. After years of Streetfighter and it's clones the playing style does take a while to get to grips with and may be off-putting at first, but perseverance will reap it's rewards as moves can be strung together with devastating results. Hidden characters in the game knock the total up to an amazing eighteen playable characters! A guaranteed hit.

STARBLADE ALPHA - NAMCO

Starblade was Namco's attempt at the Star Wars Death Star scenario and was quite popular in the arcades a few years ago. The Playstation version is more or less an identical conversion of the arcade machine with some extra texture mapping thrown in for good measure. Despite being graphically superior to its arcade parent, the game itself is better left there. Playability is severely limited and gameplay is merely pointing the crosshair at a target and hitting the fire button. The game may look and sound amazing but the gameplay is more suited for the arcades than a home system and first day completion is highly likely. A nice showcase of graphical ability but that's about it.

JUMPING FLASH! - SONY

A platform game with a difference, Jumping Flash casts you in the roll of a mechanical rabbit in search of carrots over a series of first person 3D platform levels. The graphics are excellent and range from bizarre toy worlds to underwater levels complete with sunken ship and psychotic televisions! The game moves fast and fluid and offers an entirely new perspective on the tired platform genre but, with only 18 levels to contend with, things may be over slightly too soon for experienced players. Should still be a popular title though.

GUNNERS HEAVEN - SONY

Sony's platform shoot-em-up is tough. Tough with a capital T. Boasting a cute anime graphical style and hordes of enemy sprites, Gunner's Heaven may not be the effect filled extravaganza of some of the other titles available but the gameplay is certainly set for stun. The levels include many large mid and end level bosses as

well as huge numbers of on-screen enemy sprites so you'll have to be quick on the joystick to finish this game. Maybe not the king of it's genre but certainly a decent game.

That's just a small example of what's available so far but what about up-coming releases? Here's a look at what to expect:

ZERO DIVIDE - ZOOM

Beat-em-up ala Toh Shin Den but this time with Mechs! Looks good with some excellent mecha designs but will the game engine be on a par with Toh Shin Den? Fingers crossed.

GUNDAM - BANDAI

Anime's favourite mecha are the stars in this Cockpit based action game. Looks smart with the enemy mecha rendered in polygons and some stunning intermission screens, but will it be released outside of Japan? (And be any good!)

DRAGONBALL Z - BANDAI

As mentioned before in these pages Akira Toriyama's excellent Dragonball is making an appearance on the Playstation. It look's good and, with three versions of the Super Nintendo game under their belts, Bandai should have the game engine running just right. Also, the forthcoming American appearance of the TV series could mean a western release? I hope so.

METAL JACKET - PONY CANYON

Ever wanted to drive a Labor? Well you can in this game. Drive around the 3D battle areas taking out the enemy mecha or link up your Playstation with a friend and trash them instead. Looks good and sounds like a good idea to me but will it deliver?



Top: JUMPING FLASH! (SONY)
Above: TOSHINDEN (TAKARA)



Tekken (Namco)





ARC THE LAD - SONY
RPG time on the Playstation with its first proper role player. Looks gorgeous and with the potential to kick the ass of Final Fantasy 3. I doubt that will happen but it's certainly a game on my shopping list, that's if it gets translated. Don't let me down Sony.

SONY AND NAMCOT PARTNERSHIP

An exclusive licensing deal in Europe between Namcot and Sony gives Sony the exclusive distribution of all Namcot's Japanese Playstation titles. This is good news for us as it's the Namcot titles that have really been popular with Japanese consumers. Namcot will also be producing more arcade machines with the aim of making them future Playstation titles! Tekken 2 is due out in Japanese arcades soon and a Playstation version is to follow. If Tekken was anything to go by this can only be good news for Playstation owners.

Well there you have it, an idea of what's in store for gamers during September and beyond. Sony have yet to announce a price or release date at the time of writing but mid September is fairly likely and, with the American release at a measly \$299, a fairly reasonable price tag. If this information has you sweating in anticipation, tune in next month were we'll be giving you reviews of some of the above mentioned software. MATA NE!

BOOK SCAN

Jonathan Clements reviews books about anime, manga and Japanese culture

KABOOM : Animation in the Raw

Although it may well reside in Antipodean splendour, Australian anime appreciation has made little impact in the Old World. Philip Brophy's KABOOM exhibition in Sydney went some way towards redressing the balance, putting Oz firmly on the anime map of the world. The Australians, whose claim to fame thus far has been restricted to the invention of the Anime Drinking Game on the internet, seem ideally suited to enter into a serious discussion about anime. They share a time zone with Japan, are much more inclined to learn Japanese than the lazy Poms, and also appreciate how it feels to be marginalised from the 'real' American media world (as opposed

to the British, who are normally too stupid to realise that they are too.)

One of the spin-offs from the KABOOM exhibition is the 'catalogue', a novel-length paperback on many aspects of American and Japanese cartoon culture, which is packed with raw information. With such a paucity of material around at present, KABOOM will prove invaluable to any serious anime researcher, although it is imperative that such a reader remembers to approach it with a stern critical eye.

I am already being unfair to KABOOM by setting my own standards for review. When all is said and done, it is a catalogue that accompanies a museum exhibition, and as such was probably strapped for cash and contributors. However, in this modern age of DTP technology, there is no excuse for the bad copy-editing that plagues the book throughout. Even the museum receptionist gets a credit in the book, but no-one owns up to editing the thing. There are a lot of reasons not to. Some of these are simple errors, such as a reference to Buichi Terasawa's comments on Tinkerbell when the printed interview has no such quotes. Others are more worrying, with several Japanese people and productions grossly mis-spelled. KABOOM had several translators working for the project, including Kiyo Joo who is perhaps best known in this country for the subtitle to TETSUO. If any-

one is likely to know the difference between Sonoda/Sonada, anime/anima, GENOCYBER/GENERAL CYBER, etc, it is these people, but since the logo designer (one P. Brophy) gets better billing in the acknowledgements, it is unlikely they were high enough up the food chain to check the proofs before the book was printed.

The essays in the collection range from the excellent to the impenetrable, with curator-of-many-talents Philip Brophy's 'semiotic morphology of cartoon eyes' proving to be the most mystifying of the contributions. However, it also contains some real gems of insight, as do all the other essays in the book. Brophy, for example, puts a very interesting spin on the Japanese attitude to kitsch, analysing it from an Australian immigrant perspective. Also, although his message is much confused amidst a thesaurus-busting whirlpool of psychobabble, he does provide a few theories on that old chestnut: 'why-have-they-all-got- such-big-eyes?'

Other essays tackle a number of subjects with varying degrees of success. I am in no position to comment on the quality of the American sections, but many researchers will find the Japanese sections extremely handy. For example, Manabu Yuusa's 'Japanese TV animation in the early years' provides much useful data on one of anime's less-appreciated areas. The best essay in

the entire collection is Mark Shilling's unassuming guide to DORAEMON. This is one of the most successful, yet most neglected anime/manga creations, and Shilling provides an accessible and very informative study of this infamous cartoon cat. He leans heavily towards synopsis, but this is quite in keeping with the need to inform readers about DORAEMON's subject matter before criticising it. In five years' time, when the gaps in KABOOM have been filled by other researchers, Shilling's essay is likely to remain as the definitive introduction to a particular anime.

One would be forgiven for expecting the same high level of research from Rosemary Iwamura, but her shamelessly self-referential and anecdotal essay on women in anime only manages to be defiant, as opposed to convincing. Some of her conclusions are misguided, yet still provocative, such as her assertion that there is a '...sub-textual anti-marketing message' in the blatantly materialist SAILOR MOON. Since SAILOR MOON is the biggest money-spinner Bandai have ever had, I find that a little hard to believe. However, there is much along the same lines in the essay; enough to start a few balls rolling, although not to keep them up to speed.

But it is in the provision of raw data that KABOOM really comes into its own. The interviews and profiles

that occupy a sizeable part of the book will no doubt be mined by researchers for several years to come. It's not that the writing is particularly deep, but it does provide plenty of juicy soundbites on which a good writer could hang a thesis, should they so desire. The Rumiko Takahashi interview is conducted by a Shogakukan stooge, so is necessarily bland, but there are plenty of other sources for Takahashi. Other creators such as Otomo, Sonoda, Terasawa and Miyazaki are far more forthcoming, and the presence of these interviews ought to help many a writer stay out of trouble by providing 'horse's-mouth' legitimisation for their own theories. There is also much of use within the American sections, such as a truly illuminating interview with Central Park Media's John O'Donnell, which finally explains the complicated reasons why CPM release anime under three different labels.

The profiles manage to be thought-provoking, even though unacademic. The (uncredited) writer on GALL FORCE says: 'men are mutations between feminine energy and monstrous power,' which is an interesting thought, even though the writer's failure to define energy and power makes it meaningless. The (also uncredited) thoughts on UROTSUKIDOJI were particularly interesting to me, pointing to subtexts that I had not noticed myself, even while working on the British translation. This will remain the overall effect of KABOOM, a messy, uneven affair that ranges from the excellent to the embarrassingly amateur and back again, yet still manages to pack enough information into its pages to remain a truly useful research work, in spite of all its faults.

Ask your local bookshop or library if they can get you a copy. Alternatively the book can be purchased from the Museum - write for details to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. And look out for our forthcoming feature on the conference which accompanied the exhibition, coming next issue from FRED PATTEN.

JAPAN SINKS

Although the hardback version was first published a generation ago, JAPAN SINKS remains one of the few works of textual Japanese SF available in English. Now re-released by Kodansha, the book and translation make for intriguing reading. When first published it was ahead of its time; last year it might have been regarded as a little dated, but this year it has acquired new significance.

Sakyo Komatsu is, according to Brian Aldiss, one of the most-read SF authors in the world. He remains virtually unknown in the English market, but gained many readers worldwide when JAPAN SINKS was made into a film (known here as *Tidal Wave*). But JAPAN SINKS is not the most representative Komatsu story; like his compatriot Shinichi Hoshi, much of his real skill lies in the punchy twists of SF short-stories. Many of his stories are also parables, making warnings of the if this goes on... variety. In *The Quiet Corridor*, for example, the narrator realises too late that his own sterility is not unique, and that the 'quiet corridor' of the maternity unit and the dying vegetation outside his window are but two indicators of imminent environmental collapse. More warnings are contained in *At The End Of The Endless Stream*, which shows humanity leaving a dying planet by travelling into the past. Komatsu's novel RESURRECTION DAY depicts the hellish results of a biological weapon, which leaves only a small pocket of humanity alive in the Antarctic. In each case we see the human reaction to a global problem, and this form of writing is repeated in JAPAN SINKS. The title should be enough of a hint. Scientists discover that the Japanese archipelago is just about to give way; the government tries to cover it up, but then all hell breaks loose as the inhabitants flee their drowning country. But what will happen to the global economy? Where will those millions of people go? If they leave Japan, will they still be Japanese?

Japan has always been a danger area, at risk from earthquakes, tsunami and volcanoes. Critics of anime violence who see an easy explanation in the influence of the Bomb, might already have discovered their mistake in the wake of the Kobe earthquake. Natural disasters have played an important role in the development of the Japanese psyche, and this book throws much light upon it. Komatsu's Japanese are adaptable, brave people, whose characters have been shaped by their environment. JAPAN SINKS posits the ultimate disaster, and shows us how Komatsu thinks his countrymen would deal with it.

On occasion, his observations speak volumes about Japanese attitudes. In extreme situations, Komatsu's characters revert to (stereo) type, as an insular, nationalistic and determined herd. By extrapolating 'disaster' to such extremes, Komatsu is able to amplify subtle influences to such an extent that many stereotypical views of Japan become much more understandable. However, post-Kobe, some of Komatsu's scenes are tragic in their inaccuracy. How could he have guessed that when the next big earthquake came in 1995, the res-

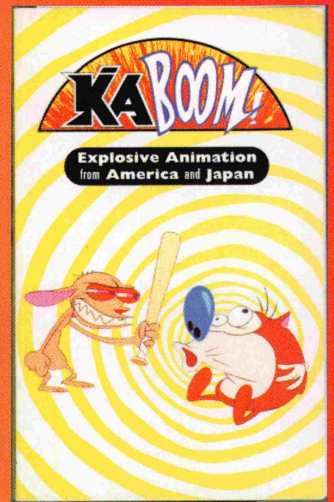
cue operation would be anything less than efficient? Komatsu expects a stiff-upper-lip heroism from his nation, and in one scene describes the arrival of humanitarian aid. It is not unlike the post-Kobe operation, although Komatsu's characters do not charge money for drinking water. Neither would they have bulldozed ruins scant days later, even though survivors were being pulled from the Mexico City site three weeks after zero-hour. While Komatsu makes many interesting points about 'the Japanese', he also makes many assumptions that have proved to be too optimistic.

This may be a symptom of the book's age. It was written 23 years ago and translated 19 years ago, two factors which may have considerably influenced the style of the English version. The 70s edition was abridged from the original by an experienced literary translator, Michael Gallagher. Gallagher is better known for his 'mainstream' works, and his versions of Mishima's *Spring Snow* and *Runaway Horses* are excellent. He did a pretty good job on JAPAN SINKS, too, but there are features of the text that both date the work and demonstrate areas where a background in 'high' culture can work to a translator's detriment. 'Software', for example, is spelt 'softwear'; a reasonable mistake in the computer-illiterate 70s, but not one that would escape the attentions of a contemporary editor. Similarly, there are a few places where Gallagher's translation seems to be pitched at the wrong market. There are words and references which would require no explanation to an audience of Japanese-language students, but which a mass-market readership would find confusing. In one scene, characters make ironic reference to the sinking of the *Tei-en*. Although readers would be aware that it is a line from an old war song (it says as much in the text), few would know that the *Tei-en*, or to give it its real name the *Ding-yuan*, was a Chinese flagship in the Sino-Japanese war, or that the lines of the song are the last words of a dying sailor, asking if his comrades have succeeded where he has failed. The pathos of the scene is thus lost on much of the readership. (Anyone who now understands that scene, please make cheques payable to ANIME FX.)

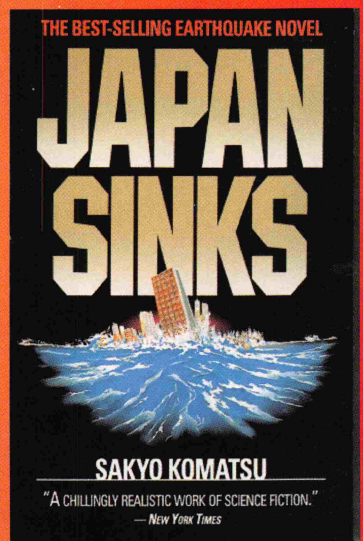
If JAPAN SINKS were a 1995 translation, things might have been very different. It is possible that Gallagher might not have been hired at all; not because he is bad (he isn't), but because there is now a significant number of skilled translators who specialise in popular texts, just as Gallagher specialises in literary works. One wonders what Birnbaum, Lewis or Schodt would have made of the same material; they too would have cut it drastical-

ly, but they might have also written for an SF audience. Readers used to 'real' SF might find JAPAN SINKS a little turgid in places, while readers of 'literature' might find the characterisation too sketchy. Using a literary translator on a popular work is like using a spanner to drive in a nail. It might work well enough, but a hammer would have done a better job. Despite these mechanical considerations, JAPAN SINKS remains an interesting book, especially when regarded out of its original context, and read by the light of the Kobe fires.

KABOOM! Explosive Animation from America and Japan. 1994, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. ISBN : 1 875 632 32 8.



Japan Sinks, by Sakyo Komatsu, trans. Michael Gallagher. 1995, Kodansha International. ISBN 4 7700 2039 2

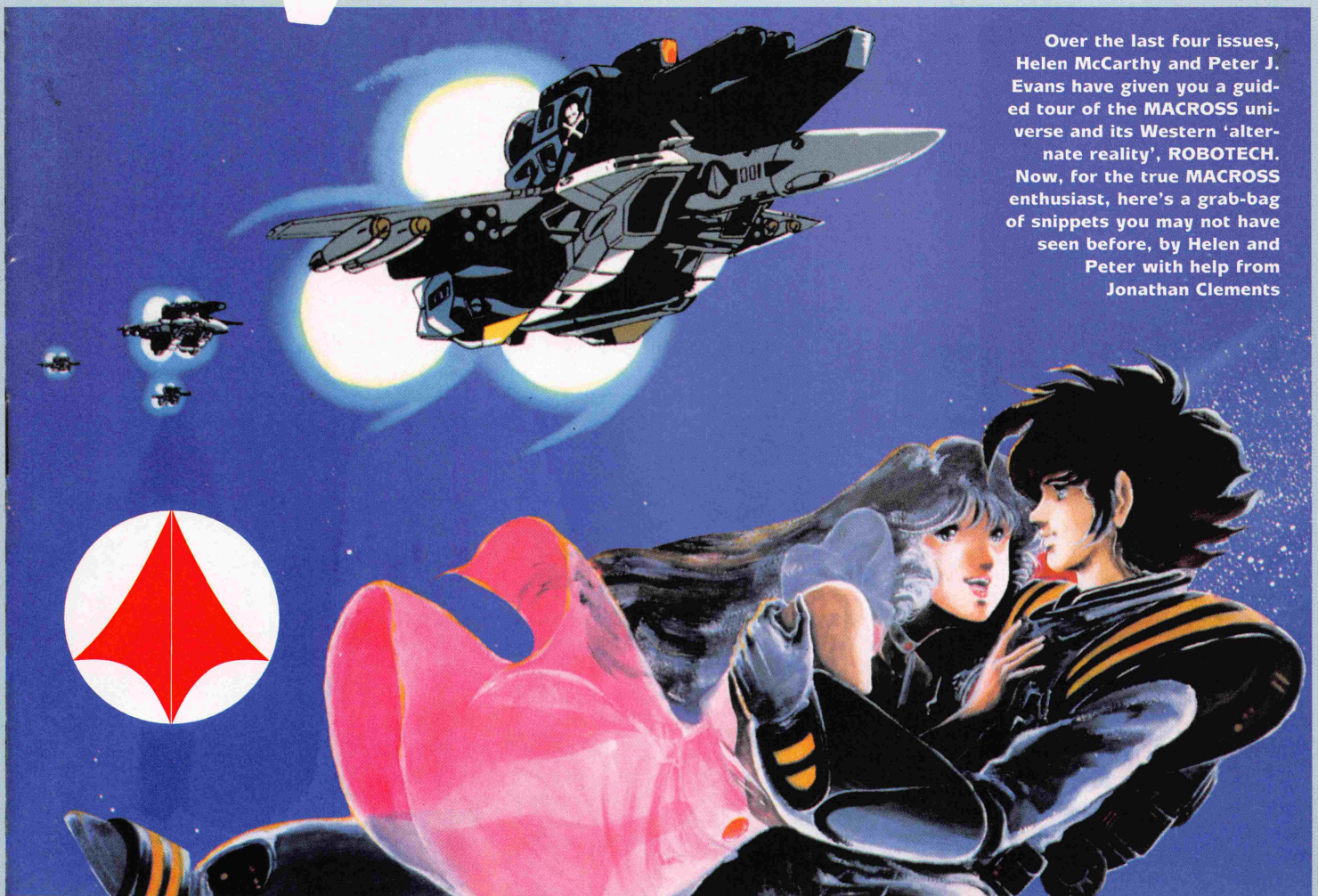


MACROSS



Graffiti

Over the last four issues, Helen McCarthy and Peter J. Evans have given you a guided tour of the MACROSS universe and its Western 'alternate reality', ROBOTECH. Now, for the true MACROSS enthusiast, here's a grab-bag of snippets you may not have seen before, by Helen and Peter with help from Jonathan Clements





SING THE SONG THAT SAVED MANKIND!

Lynn Minmay's haunting number translated in a rhymed version for English karaoke wannabes by JONATHAN CLEMENTS

DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?

(Rhyming version)

N.B. : Lines in italics appear on the full-length version, but have been cut from the version that Minmay sings in MACROSS : DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE?

Right now ... I can hear your voice
calling me
You're crossing over the line
I'm defeated, and I'm lost without a
friend
Right now ... I see a silhouette, let
it be
Your figure running to mine
Eyes are closing, and I wait for this
to end

Till yesterday ... my eyes were full
of tears
Now everything is fine ...

Tell me do you still remember
When our eyes met and we saw
each other?

Tell me do you still remember
When our arms reached out and
found a lover?

That was only the beginning
Of a love that could go on for ever
I love you so ...

Right now ... now I've seen the look
in your eyes

Even when we're apart
Your love enfolds me, and it keeps
the cold at bay

*Right now ... your love is genuine,
no more lies*

*To you I offer my heart
Take it with you, for eternity and a
day*

Till yesterday ... my eyes were full
of tears
Now all the world is mine ...

Tell me do you still remember
When our eyes met and we saw
each other?

Tell me do you still remember
When our arms reached out and
found a lover?

That was only the beginning
Of a love that could go on forever
I love you so ...

Now ... I won't be ... evermore ...
lonely

For you are here with me ...
(repeat)

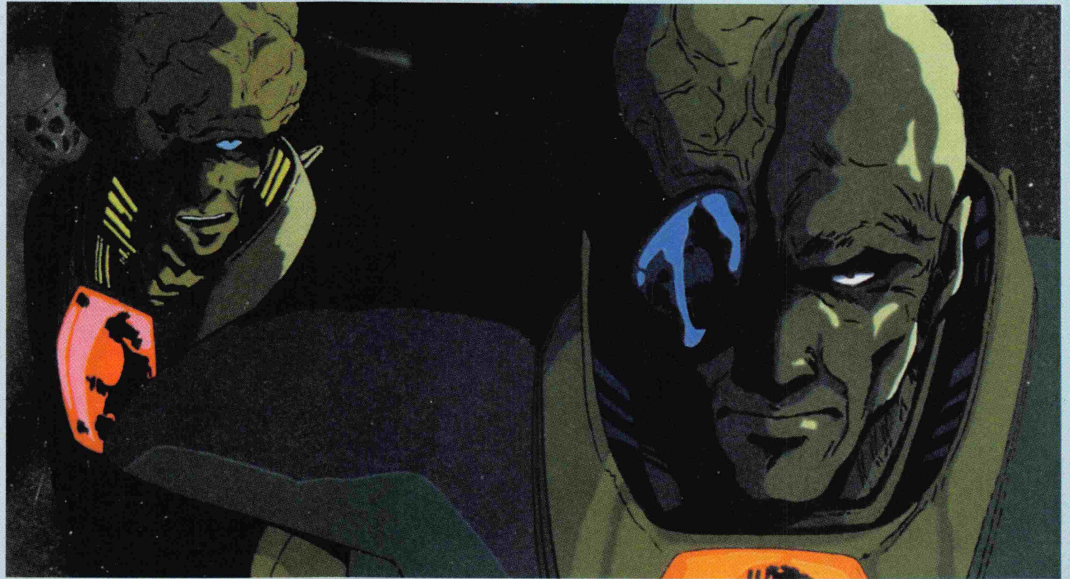
MACROSS LIVE!

Plans were laid for a Hollywood live-action film based on the plot of MACROSS DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE? It was to have been a largescale SFX movie with emphasis on the songs. It was shelved four months into pro-production, but then a second draft of the script was commissioned from American writers. Things went no further and at present the project looks unlikely to go any further.

MACROSS GOODIES

It would take a substantial volume to list all the kits, toys, books, stationery items and other memorabilia devoted to the various incarnations of MACROSS in the last decade, starting with 'character merchandising' of the robot kits, going through cute SD 'tamago' (egg) Valkyries and on to enough paper goods to destroy several rainforests. ROBOTECH toys also enjoyed some success in the West, with Harmony Gold first licensing Matchbox to produce

action figures, dolls and mecha, and then taking over production itself. The mecha toys were large, well-produced versions of the series craft; unfortunately the action figures had all the usual limitations of their format, ie none of them looked very like the character they were supposed to represent, and all the females looked like males. The dolls were 12" Sindy-types, and while they didn't much resemble the characters they made some attempt at reproducing the uniforms of the SDF-1 crew.



TEACH YOURSELF ZENTRADI

During the height of MACROSS merchandise mania in the mid eighties, hobby and model kit company NICHIMO produced a nifty little Zentradi language printer to let you send secret messages encoded into Zentradi. It came complete with pre-printed message slips, a Zentradi word text book, envelopes and a stamp pad. You'd be lucky to find one nowadays, of course. Its joined the ranks of MACROSS Collectors items..... but don't let that stop you. Use our handy reference key!



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

& R C G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

J U O H \ X C H H O

THE MECHA OF MACROSS II by PETER J. EVANS

VALKYRIE VF-2JA ATMOSPHERE FIGHTER

The basic form of the Valkyrie fighter has not altered in the eighty years since the first war; despite numerous technological and design advances, the craft still utilises the three-mode system of jet, GERWALK, and battroid (now known as Soldier), which gives it multi-role capability and assures its place as the backbone of the U. N. Spacy forces.

The VF-2JA has been in service for some fifty years with little change, but is considerably faster and better protected than its older cousins. Although it is termed an Atmosphere Fighter, it can operate in space with reasonable efficiency; however it has no orbital insertion capability, and must either be carried aboard another craft or fitted with boosters to reach orbit.

Weapon systems include twin laser cannons mounted on the head in soldier mode (under the plane's belly in jet mode), two missile pods capable of carrying two long-range missiles each or four short-range, and a BC-60 Beam Cannon. Other weapons can be fitted, including the 2-SS Heavy Gun Pod, a rapid-firing magnetic railgun.

Height : 13.00 metres (in Soldier mode)
Weight : 25.35 tonnes, plus 11 tonnes for the missile pods
Crew : One, although two others can be accommodated in an emergency.
Engine : Nuclear power plant with 12-year lifespan

VALKYRIE II VF-2SS STANDARD SPACE FIGHTER

Usually known as the Space Valkyrie or Space Fighter, the VF-2SS is a three-mode combat mecha based on the standard Valkyrie, but adapted for use in zero-g, zero-atmosphere environments. Fitted with a variety of extra drives and maneuvering thrusters, the Space Fighter is an extremely fast and reliable piece of hardware, with a modular design that allows easy augmentation through the use of special weapons packs.

Although the VF-2SS can operate in an atmosphere, it is less aerodynamic than its more planet-bound cousins, and is limited to a top speed of mach 2.5 in air (as opposed to the 2JA's mach 4). In its basic configuration, the Space Fighter is armed with laser cannons in the head assembly and a 2SS Heavy Gun Pod as standard.

Height : 14.00 metres (in Soldier mode)
Weight : 31.96 tonnes
Crew : One, although two others can be accommodated in an emergency
Engine : Nuclear powerplant with 12-year lifespan

VALKYRIE II VF-2SS SAP SPECIAL SPACE FIGHTER

The standard Space Fighter can be fitted with a variety of augmentation packs, depending on its mission para-

eters. One of the most devastating of these is the SAP Super Armour Pack, which converts the sleek and brutally fast Space Fighter into a heavily-armed assault unit. Although the additional mass of the SAP (almost 22 tonnes) has some effect on the inertia of the craft in space, this can be compensated for. In atmosphere, however, a VS-2SS SAP is sluggish and unmaneuverable.

The SAP provides the following weapon systems in addition to those found on the standard Fighter; a Super Beam Cannon, mounted high on the SAP pack; three Missile Shields, each containing two long range missiles with either conventional or nuclear warhead capacity; nine micro-missiles on each arm; twelve micro-missiles on each leg; and two forearm weapons compartments, capable of containing either a 2-SS or a BC-60.

Height : 15.20 metres (in Soldier mode)
Weight : 53.94 tonnes
Crew : One, although two others can be accommodated in an emergency
Engine : Nuclear powerplant with 12-year lifespan.



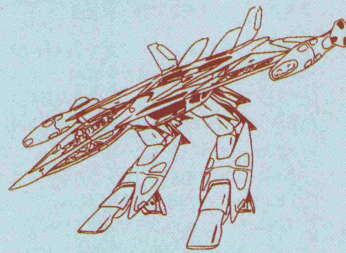
NOTE: Last issue the VF-2SS was incorrectly called the VF-Xs

VC-079 CIVILIAN VALKYRIE

The success of the Valkyrie among the military has prompted the UN Spacy, in a brilliant flash of financial acumen, to authorise the production and sale of a civilian version. termed the VC-079, the Civilian Valkyrie is a two-mode system, lacking the ability to transform into Soldier mode. In GERWALK mode, the craft has no arms, and can therefore engage in nothing more than the most rudimentary combat.

Used mainly by large-scale corporations, civil defence establishments and news networks, the VC-079 is designed primarily for use in an atmosphere. However, due to the large number of orbital concerns existing in 2089, a booster system is available to give the craft orbital insertion capability. Companies like the Scramble News Network and communications agencies have extensively modified their VC-079s to improve their detection, communication, and recording facilities.

Height : 6.70 metres (in GERWALK mode)

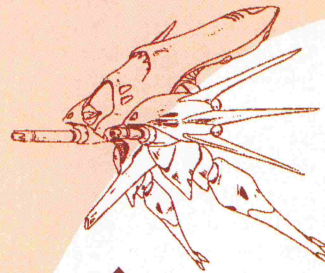


Weight : 33.06 tonnes
Crew : Two, although two others can be accommodated in an emergency
Engine : Nuclear powerplant with 6-8 year lifespan.

ZENTRAN BATTLE POD

Although still recognisable as Zentran technology, the standard infantry battle pod has come a long way from the old Regult tactical pod. An anti-gravity propulsion system negates the need for the Regult's vulnerable and tiring legs, allowing both unlimited maneuverability at ground level and orbital insertion capability. In space, the AG system needs a mass to 'push' against; where none is available, four small thrusters can be used to power the vessel. The giant Zentran pilot lies prone within the machine's hull, controlling the pod via a pair of joysticks. The battle pod is armed with two small laser cannons below the sensor array, two energy cannons on the upper hull, and a pair of short-range missile launchers, each holding 36 micro-missiles with conventional warheads. The hook-like system on the pod's belly is primarily to facilitate storage when the pod is being transported, but can be used in a limited form of close combat.

Height : 10.00 metres
Weight : 39.06 tonnes
Crew : One (Zentran)
engine : Nuclear power plant with 20 year lifespan



ZENTRAN OFFICER POD

Based on the standard battle pod but vastly upgraded in terms of protection and maneuverability, the officer's pod is both a lthal piece of space hardware and aerodynamic enough to be effective in atmospheric combat as well. The pod is fitted with legs, but these are mainly used for setting up a stable firing platform, and are little use in terms of running or jumping. An anti-gravity propulsion system is included - like the standard pod - but is augmented by four high-power thrusters for conventional flight.

The officer pod is armed with two heavy laser cannon, mounted on the thruster assemblies; a clamshell missile launcher in the upper body, capable of firing twenty-four medium-range missiles; and a drum of nine micro-missiles in the rear.

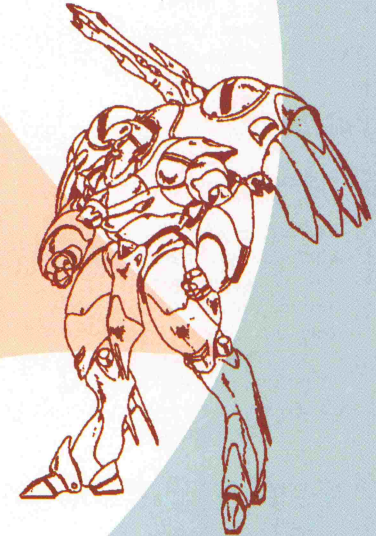
Height : 15.80 metres
Weight : 96.97 tonnes fully loaded
Crew : One (Zentran)
Engine : Nuclear power plant with 20 year lifespan

ZENTRAN POWER ARMOUR

Based heavily on the Noujaadul-Ger Zentradi power armour, this environmental suit has been heavily upgraded by the Marduk empire, providing improved protection, speed and fire-power over the original. The exoskeletal nature of the armour provides supreme mobility and close-combat potential, making it ideal for assault roles in confined or crowded conditions.

The armour has two primary weapons systems : a particle cannon mounted on an over-the-shoulder swivel, and an impact cannon in the chest. In addition, the pilot may opt to carry a standard Zentran assault rifle, a magnetic railgun similar to the UN Spacy 2-SS.

Height : 15.00 metres, not counting the particle cannon
Weight : 41.88 tonnes
Crew : One (Zentran)
engine : Nuclear powerplant with 20 year lifespan



MELTRAN POWER ARMOUR

While retaining some vague similarities to the Zentradi Queadlunn-Rau female power armour is an altogether sleeker, more elegant and deadly piece of hardware, issued solely to the Marduk's Meltran infantry contingent - regarded as being more intelligent and aggressive than their Zentran counterparts - the Maltran armour appears almost mediaeval in design, even down to the two-handed energy lance which is its primary weapon.

The lance is fitted with a series of energy-resonance blades at one end, capable of carving through Valkyrie armour. At the other end is a powerful pulse laser, hidden beneath a bayonet-like cover.

Height : 13.70 metres
Weight : 30.86 tonnes
Crew : One (Meltran)
Engine : Nuclear powerplant with 20 year lifespan

MACROSS GAME ON!

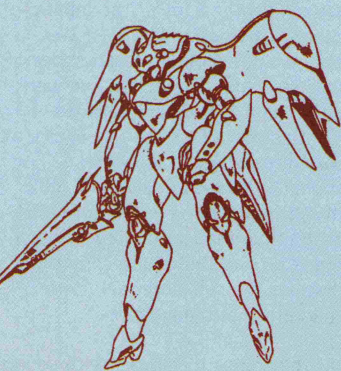
SOME OF THE CONSOLE VERSIONS OF THE SAGA

As far back as 1985 there was a 'shooting game' for the NES. Bandai brought it out under the rather conservative title of SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS SCRAMBLE VALKYRIE, and it featured a Valkyrie that could transform into three modes.

Shoot-'em-up fans were also catered for by 1992's MACROSS 2036, enabling them to 'continue the original story of the television series', to quote the Japanese publicity, on their PC Engine or Super CD-ROM. The basis of the game is that Earth is once more threatened by alien forces, this time immune to the infamous Minmei Attack. It's up to Max and Miria's oldest daughter Komiria (Dana Sterling of ROBOT-ECH, big sister to Milene in MACROSS 7) to save the day. The same platforms could also run ETERNAL LOVE SONG, a roleplay-based 'Macross simulation game' set in 2037.

MACROSS DIGITAL MISSION VF-X

Publicity for the new MACROSS game for the Sony Playstation promises the first of a new generation of flight simulators, with 'full polygon imaging to test the Playstation to its limits'. A new five-member team of young characters will include a 'great new heroine for the Macross universe'. (What are the odds on another idol singer? Pretty good, you'd have to say ...) You'll also have a choice of six different Valkyries, the VF-1, VF-4, VF-11, VF-17, VF-19 and VF-21, each with all three transforming modes - a total of eighteen different ways of kicking the protoclulture out of each other! Special note should be made of the VF-4, which only appeared once previously, as a prototype in SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS FLASHBACK 2012. The game will be on sale in December of 1995 and, of course, Shoji Kawamori is in charge of all the work. He is also rumoured to be working in Los Angeles on a 3D MACROSS dogfight game. Another one to watch for ...



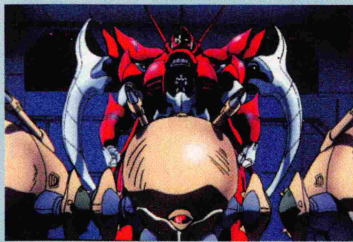
GILGAMESH TYPE I & II

Unlike their Zentrans/Meltrons slaves, the Marduk are humanoid in both size and form. The size of their battle-mecha is comparable to a Zentrans or Meltrons in power armour, but the internal structure is more akin to a UN Spacy mecha, with the pilot secured in an armoured cocoon within the chest assembly.

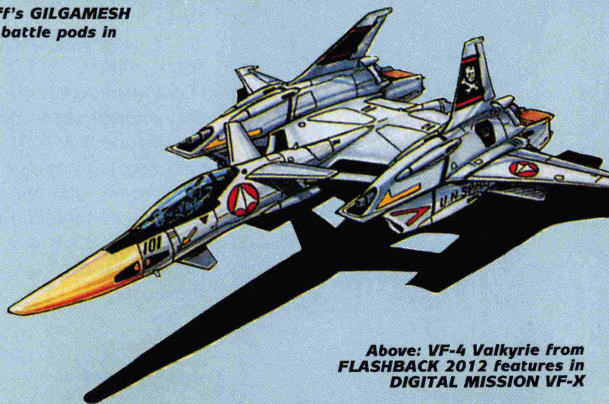
The Gilgamesh I & II (named after a figure in ancient Babylonian mythology, as is 'Marduk') are very similar in construction and capability, with only cosmetic differences to denote rank. The Type II is used by Lord Feff and Marduk of equal rank, and has a curved face shield, larger shoulder-blades, and more in the way of command and control systems. The primary weapon of the Gilgamesh is the micro-missile launchers in each forearm, carrying a total of thirty-six conventional missiles. In close combat, the mecha relies on its clawed hands and feet, and the shoulder scythes, which can be projected on a long chain to attack at medium range or double as a hand-held weapon.

(Note : data given is for the Gilgamesh Type II)

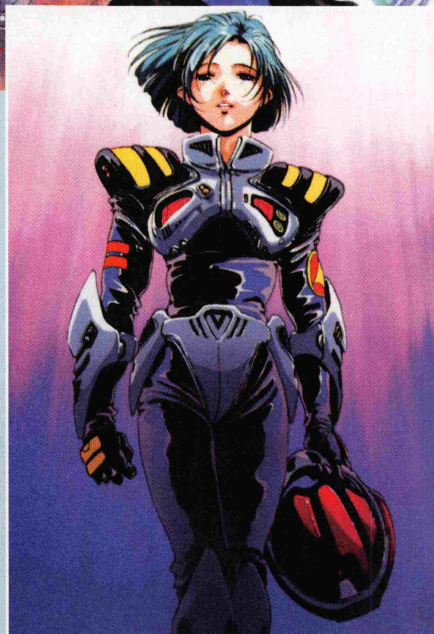
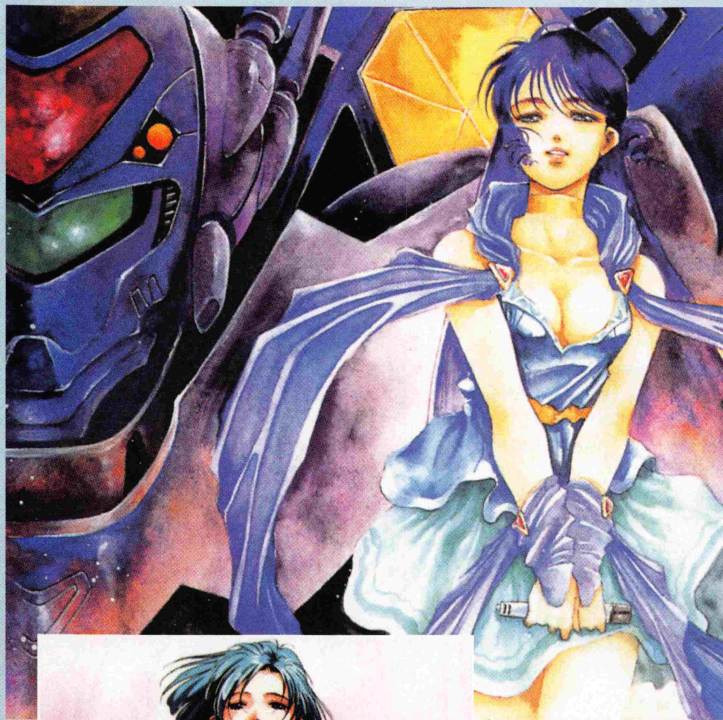
Height : 14.60 metres, not counting the communications antennae
Weight : 44.08 tonnes
Crew : One (Marduk)
Engine : Nuclear powerplant with 20 year lifespan



Above: Lord Feff's GILGAMESH II with Zentrans battle pods in the foreground



Above: VF-4 Valkyrie from FLASHBACK 2012 features in DIGITAL MISSION VF-X



Above: Scramble Valkyrie
Left: Macross 2036:Komiria
Below: Digital Mission VF-X



JIM SWALLOW talks to BLOOMSBURY'S BARRY CUNNINGHAM

One would hardly think that a publisher whose writer stable includes winners of the Booker and the Nobel Prize for Literature would be the place to find a unique new manga comicbook for the 10+ and 12-16 year old age bracket. Yet this is exactly what Bloomsbury Publishing will be fielding to the mainstream childrens' book market from July, as part of their new young readers' wing. IRONFIST CHINMI is a martial arts manga series set in feudal China, charting the growth of the feisty kungfu kid Chinmi from undisciplined preteen to ultimately wiser post-puberty master, through a saga that evokes memories of myriad Shaw Brothers, Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan flicks. First published in Kodansha's anthology MONTHLY SHONEN, over twenty-eight volumes of creator Takeshi Maekawa's CHINMI adventures have been reprinted for manga readers in Japan, and even a short-lived anime series was produced. Marketing the book in the U.K. in 200-page black & white volumes, Bloomsbury have taken the radical decision to run IRONFIST in its original Japanese format, rejecting the more common mirror-flipped style used by most manga translators. While not the first to take this step (European publishers of Akira Toriyama's smash hit DRAGONBALL have been selling it unflipped for some time), Bloomsbury is the first mainstream English-language publisher to make the attempt, and many marketing rivals are watching closely to see how their bold move fares.

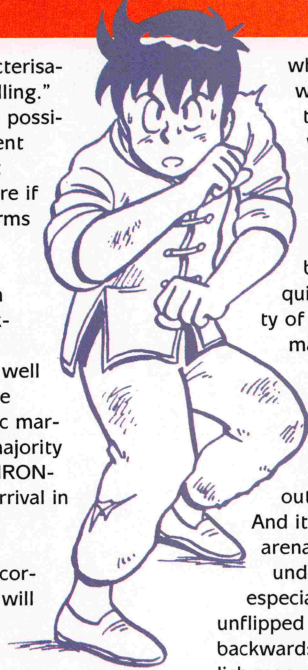
Barry Cunningham, whose task it is to handle the CHINMI books, comes from a background which crossed over into the graphic medium (which he describes as "a true modern art") with Art Spiegelman's MAUS and with the original Games Workshop Fighting Fantasy gamebooks. Heavily influenced by his children, Cunningham mentions how their enjoyment of material like TANK GIRL and AKIRA tuned him in to the idea of a manga series for children. "There is a great market for books which communicate in very strong, visual, graphic storytelling." He talks of how he "went looking" for a suitable manga for this potential mass market, something with the ability to "catch a fire with a generation brought up on visual images ... I saw that the main action (in manga) was told in pictures." Initially, Bloomsbury decided to produce a "boys" title with IRONFIST CHINMI, although Cunningham mentions that plans are afoot to produce a "girls" title by the end of 1995 or early in 1996. "I do think that there is a lot in IRONFIST that girls will enjoy as well, because of

its strong characterisation and storytelling." He also sees the possibility of movement into young adult titles in the future if IRONFIST performs well.

As a mainstream high street bookshop publisher, Bloomsbury are well clear of the more specialised comic market where the majority of manga sells; IRONFIST CHINMI's arrival in local WH Smiths, bookstores and corner newsagents will open up a new audience largely unexposed to Japanese storytelling concepts. "A

MANGA IN FOCUS

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK



whole new audience who will hear about us through their school bookshops as well as word of mouth ..." Cunningham believes that Bloomsbury's accessible 'outsider' approach to sales will pay dividends - but at the same time, he is quick to point out the validity of the smaller enthusiast market. "We haven't applied standards that exclude anybody ... We hope that the fans will welcome the books and be pleased that it will break out into the mainstream." And it is perhaps in the fan arena that IRONFIST will come under strongest scrutiny, especially because of the unflipped paging. So why print backwards? "I'm very keen to establish manga as something that is genuinely exciting and different.

We're keeping a lot of the Japanese packaging (the familiar dust jackets), we're keeping a fair number of Japanese sound effects ... we wanted to keep the reading back-to-front as part of its attractiveness, as part of its genuine Japanese appeal." He also adds with a smile that it may "confuse the more stick-in-the-mud readers and adults, and that's no bad thing with something that has the cult potential (with children) that manga does."

His reluctance to tamper with sound effects (which, in expressive manga like CHINMI, are big and boisterous) stems from this desire to keep the artwork intact and natural, and he has nothing but praise for translator (and regular AFX columnist) Jonathan Clements: "I wanted something that had slang where slang was used, strength of dialogue for individual characters ... I was delighted with what Jonathan had done." He hopes that material like IRONFIST will work well in an educational context to encourage 'reluctant readers' into a book medium that contains ongoing plot and characterisation. "Manga (and anime) are so different from much Western material in that they offer character development ... In our books Chinmi not only grows in terms of experience, but in the way that he deals with the crises in his life ... the growth of the character has a lot to 'teach' in an entertaining way about how plot, characterisation and dialogue work."

After the brief tabloid tirade over 'manga cartoons' (sic) there must be a potential for a negative parental response to combative manga like IRONFIST. "A lot of these kind of things come out of ignorance", says Cunningham. "From some parents, teachers and librarians there will be a degree of bad reaction ... but those who take the time will find this is a real contribution to the excitement of reading and the understanding of graphic storytelling."

For the future, after the six 1995 volumes are released, Bloomsbury hope to take IRONFIST CHINMI to Australia and the United States, and they are also looking at new titles such as MIRACLE GIRLS, WAHAAA-MAN and SAILOR MOON. Have they considered bringing the IRONFIST TV series to the West? "We are talking to cable and satellite companies about anime ... but it's still in the very early stages." What does Cunningham see in the years ahead for this medium? "As soon as anime gets access to mass-media, in your living room, that will add enormously to the general enthusiasm for the material ... If it's absurdly diluted we'll be back to the closet."



Top: Chinmi
Bottom: Coming soon? Sailor Moon



INCOMING

SEPTEMBER 1995

Our industry source tells you what to look for on the shelves in the UK and USA next month

MANGA

Both US and UK releases can be obtained from any good specialist comic store

ACADEMY COMICS LTD

ROBOTECH : MACROSS TEMPEST #1 One-shot spinoff featuring Roy Fokker
ROBOTECH : MECH ANGEL #0 The adventures of Mech Angel, a beautiful female Zentraedi assassin, in the days before the Robotech Masters invaded Earth.
ROBOTECH II : SENTINELS BOOK III #21
ROBOTECH : RETURN TO MACROSS #25
WORLDS OF ROBOTECH GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL. 1 Over 100 pages of Robotech's alien worlds!

ANTARCTIC PRESS

This company specialise in dojinshi or non-professional fan manga, and is well worth a closer look!

F-III BANDIT #5 by Ippongi Bang Another peculiar tale from the mistress of dojinshi
HITOMI : GEHAMMER 10 by Dave Wilson US manga
HURRICANE GIRLS #2 by Hiroshi Yakumo Mystic protectors battle demons and worse in this babetastic fantasy tale.
MANGAZINE #40 Close up on IRON LEAGUER, a new mech action series. Plus news and info.
NINJA HIGH SCHOOL #48 by Marshall & Lunsford
NINJA HIGH SCHOOL GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL 7 by Ben Dunn Collects issues #22-24 of the hard-to-find NHS series.

BLOOMSBURY

VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT by Takeshi Maekawa
LEAP OF FAITH by Takeshi Maekawa: Bloomsbury continue their successful manga line with the latest volumes in the tale of Ironfist Chinmi

CPM COMICS

CYBER CITY OEDO #1 by Eldred & Studio Go!
CYBER CITY OEDO #2 by Eldred & Studio Go! BLADE RUNNER meets DIE HARD in this explosive series! US manga based on the OAV series
GALL FORCE : ETERNAL STORY #4 by Lewis & Studio Go! US Manga version of the wellknown series.

DAIKAIJU ENTERPRISES

G-FAN #17 If you're a fan of the funky radioactive mutant dinosaur known as Godzilla, this is the mag for you! Indepth coverage of everything Godzilla.

DARK HORSE COMICS

You can always be assured of quality releases from this company, and a growing commitment to publishing manga.

GUNSMITH CATS #5 by Kenichi Sonoda Bonnie and Clyde, sadistic bounty hunters for hire, are back - and their sights are set firmly on the Gunsmith Cats!
DIRTY PAIR : FATAL BUT NOT SERIOUS #3 by Adam Warren Probably the finest example of US manga, this Pair are really Dirty! Witness the rampage of the anti-Yuri! In colour. **Recommended.**
GODZILLA #4 by Maguire, McKinney, Reed US manga
LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH #6 by Otomo & Nagayasu
OH MY GODDESS! PART 2 # 8 by Kosuke Fujishima

GHOST IN THE SHELL #7 by Masamune Shirow Major Kusanagi spends some time behind bars - with a bunch of terrorists she sent there herself! Will she make it through the first week?

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

SAKE JOCK by Various A new anthology of contemporary Japanese underground comics, covering a wide variety of styles and topics. If you're at all interested in manga that doesn't feature giant robots or schoolgirls, this could be worth a look.

GRAPHIC VISIONS

A relatively new company spun off video house AD VISION, they tend to specialise in more 'adult' manga and US adaptations of anime.
THE S.W.E.E.T. COP #3 by Kei Amagi **MATURE READERS ONLY**
DRAGON PINK #1 by Itoyoko The manga that inspired the saucy anime version! Meet Pink, a poor little slave girl with a knack for getting into trouble (and losing her clothes!) **MATURE READERS ONLY**

MANGA PUBLISHING

MANGA MANIA #27 Latest instalments of news and reviews from around the world, and more manga strips!
STRET FIGHTER II by Masaomi Kanazaki
AD POLICE GRAPHIC NOVEL by Tony Takezaki Popular BUBBELGUM CRISIS spinoff
APPLESEED GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL 1 by Masamune Shirow Deunan and Briareos in their first adventure
BUBBLEGUM CRISIS by Adam Warren Full colour
CRYING FREEMAN GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL 1 by Ryoichi Ikegami
DIRTY PAIR VOL 1 by Adam Warren

MANGAJIN

MANGAJIN #49 A focus on gambling in Japan, and the usual examination of popular culture and language learning

R. TALSORIAN GAMES

V-MAX VOL 2 #3 Features include COMPILER and LEGEND OF GALACTIC HEROES, and the usual news and reviews
V-MAX VOL 2 #4 Hurrah! Coverage of the programme that is probably responsible for a number of anime fans becoming anime fans - BATTLE OF THE PLANETS - with coverage of the new GATCHAMAN OAV series as well as the original

SCISSORS BOOKS

JAMM! #4 A rather impressive magazine from Belgium (English language) which features THIS IS GREENWOOD, CREAM LEMON and DRAGONBALL Z

VEROTIK

DEVILMAN #4 by Go Nagai **MATURE READERS ONLY**

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

The best selection of translated manga is available from this publisher, with a wide range of genres covered
MAISON IKKOKU PART 4 #9 by Rumiko Takahashi A superb bitter-sweet love story from the creator of the popular RANMA series - but be warned : no shape-changing here, just thwarted love and comic misunderstanding. **Recommended.**
MANGA VIZONS VOL 1 #7 Another collection of assorted manga featuring 'Ogre Slayer' by Kei Kusunoki, 'Samurai Crusader' by Ryoichi Ikegami and 'Those Selfish Aliens' by Rumiko Takahashi

NAUSICAA PART 5 # 3 by Hayao Miyazaki A beautifully crafted tale of sociological disaster and the indomitable human spirit. **Recommended.**

RANMA 1/2 GRAPHIC NOVEL #5 by Rumiko Takahashi
MAISON IKKOKU : HOME SWEET HOME GRAPHIC NOVEL by Rumiko Takahashi

RETURN OF LUM PART 2 #2 by Rumiko Takahashi
SANCTUARY PART 4 #2 by Fumimura and Ikegami

X/1999 #5 by Clamp An ominous vision of the future of Tokyo forecasts more trouble for Kamui, who could be the saviour of Tokyo - or its destroyer!
ANIMERICA VOL 3 #9 An in-depth look at OGRE SLAYER, the OAV based on the manga now running in MANGA VIZION, and a new manga strip!
CRYING FREEMAN PERFECT COLLECTION GRAPHIC NOVEL : A TASTE OF REVENGE by Koike and Ikegami

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA PART 5 #3 by Yukito Kishiro
BIO BOOSTER ARMOR GUYVER PART 3 #6 by Yoshiki Takaya

MERMAID'S MASK #3 by Rumiko Takahashi The sinister stories of immortality continue in the latest instalment of Takahashi's chilling Mermaid series. **Recommended**
RANMA 1/2 PART 4 #9 by Rumiko Takahashi Ranma and Ryoga's quest to recover their manhood continues; unfortunately the spring they need is located underneath the girls' changing rooms at Furinkan High School. Here comes more trouble! **Recommended.**
STRIKER : SECRET OF THE BERSERKER #3 by Takashige and Minegawa Earth isn't ready for the power of the Berserker - and Yu, the Striker, must try to stop it.

ANIME US RELEASES

AD VISION

MAPS eps 1 & 2 Subtitled in English An over the top SF thriller featuring sixty story high space ships demolishing Tokyo. What, again?

ANIMEIGO

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! AND SO THEY MET Dubbed/Subtitled. Tokyo Highway Patrol Officers Natsumi and Miyuki finally make it to the West, and mayhem is sure to follow! From the creator of the popular OH MY GOD-DESS! series.
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! TOKYO TYPHOON RALLY Dubbed/subtitled. More manic escapades from the reckless Highway Officers.
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! Both episodes are also available on Hybrid Laser Disc.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT US

ANGEL COP VOL 3 Dubbed in English
NEW DOMINION TANK POLICE VOL 3 Dubbed in English
ORGUSS 02 VOL 3 Dubbed in English

PIONEER

ARMITAGE III EPISODE 2 Dubbed/subtitled This sexy, stylish cyberpunk thriller continues. **Recommended.**

SOFTCEL PICTURES MATURE VIEWERS ONLY

DRAGON PINK VOL 2 Subtitled in English (available in Uncut and Edited versions)
NEW ANGEL subtitled in English (available in Uncut and Edited versions)

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS

METAL FIGHTERS MIKU EPS 1-3 Subtitled in English In the year 2000, female wrestling is the latest hot sport - but female wrestling with a difference. These metal clad babes are out to win that title, and the action looks

fast and furious!

ZENKI EPS 1-3 Subtitled in English

STREAMLINE PICTURES

MEGAZONE 23 PART ONE Dubbed in English

VOYAGER ENTERTAINMENT

BE FOREVER YAMATO Subtitled in English Regarded by many as the finest YAMATO film

US MANGA CORPS

GALL FORCE : NEW ERA Subtitled in English The apocalyptic saga of the last remnants of humanity continues.
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR VOL 4 Subtitled in English. The epic D & D fantasy continues in this latest volume of the acclaimed series
THE TALE OF GENJI Subtitled in English A faithful interpretation of Murasaki Shikibu's classic
DEMON CITY SHINJUKU Dubbed in English

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS VIDEO

RANMA 1/2: THE BREAKING POINT Dubbed in English. Ranma is in for the fight of his life, as Shampoo's grandmother teaches Ryoga the dreaded 'breaking point' technique!
FATAL FURY : THE MOTION PICTURE Dubbed in English The characters of the video game come to life in this full length martial arts contest.

UK RELEASES

ANIME PROJECTS

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS VOL 7 Dubbed in English
URUSEI YATSURA TV VOL 7 Subtitled in English

KISEKI FILMS

SOL BIANCA 1 Subtitled in English Girl space pirates in an action-packed adventure
ADVENTURE DUO Subtitled in English All 3 episodes on one budget-priced tape, £10.99
UROTSUKIDOJI : LEGEND OF THE OVERFIEND III, PARTS 1-4 Dubbed in English Another budget presentation, all four parts on one tape for £12.99

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

ANGEL COP VOL 5 Dubbed in English
DOMINION TANK POLICE VOL 10 Dubbed in English
CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO Dubbed in English A phenomenally funny and thrilling criminal caper. Miyazaki's first feature film. **Recommended.**
KABUTO Dubbed in English Samurai against evil spirits
PATLABOR Subtitled in English The visually stunning and effective PATLABOR movie available in pristine subtitled form.
PROJECT A-KO VOL 3 Dubbed in English More wacky schoolgirl hijinks!
VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU PART ONE Dubbed in English A moody and stylish tale of vampires, spirits and the eternal struggle against darkness.
WINGS OF HONNEAMISE Subtitled in English Another quality film released with subtitles. **Recommended.**

ZEIRAM Dubbed in English Not strictly anime (as it's live action) but the themes, characters and special effects are straight out of anime and there is an OAV series based on it! Interstellar bounty hunters, unstoppable bio-organic weapons, and two hapless humans caught in the middle.

UK CD RELEASES

DEMON RECORDS

MACROSS PLUS SOUNDTRACK The haunting soundtrack to the rather good MACROSS PLUS OAV series available on compact disc



U.K. RELEASES

ANGEL COP 4

MANGA VIDEO, MANV 1096, 30 Mins approx, CERT 18

Angel and the SSF are now officially on the termination list, but where the combined might of the Red May terrorist group and government SWAT teams failed, it looks like Lucifer - leader of the psionic Hunters - may very well succeed.

While Hacker and Peace attempt to drive the terrorist prisoner Tachihara to safety, Kuwata stays behind to confront the Hunters, which, on reflection, is a really stupid thing to do. Terminally stupid, as it turns out: while the pyrokinetic Freya and Asura, her guardian (who looks more like Queen's Brian May than he has any right to) still retain some measure of purpose and morality, Lucifer is a total sado-psycho with a lethal agenda and the ability to drive a motorbike no-hands. What she does to get information out of Kuwata gives 'picking your brains' a whole new meaning.

Angel finally learns the truth behind the H-files, but way too late: the Hunters' organisation has split down the middle. All this leads to a messy Akira-style psychic punch-up, with half the show's cast getting beamed in the crossfire. The credit list is going to be a whole lot shorter in parts 5 and 6...

Unlike Dominion, the quality of Angel Cop has remained reasonably consistent. It looks good - largely thanks to Nobuteru Yuuki's character designs - and moves well, and while the voicing may not be perfect, it's certainly adequate, with no more than the usual amount of coarse Anglo-Saxon. To conclude, then, Pain is simply the next episode in the Angel Cop series; no more, but certainly no less.

P.J. EVANS

SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA

MANGA VIDEO, MANV 1084, 95 mins approx, Cert PG

Probably the most classic example of the 'lovable rogue' ever devised, Cobra is Buichi Terasawa's first and foremost

creation; a lecherous, heroic, risk-loving space pirate, hunted throughout the inhabited universe by the agents of law and crime alike. His adventures were detailed in a seven-year manga series that began in 1977, the central story of which forms the basis of this movie.

Missing and presumed dead for two years, Cobra is brought out of retirement by a chance encounter with a beautiful bounty hunter called Jane Flower. Having incurred the wrath of Lord Necron - a crystalline cyborg who leads the largest crime syndicate in the galaxy - Jane turns to the cigar-chomping pirate for help, and soon the pair are hurtling through space on a breakneck search for Jane's two lost sisters and her wandering planet, with Necron and his mechanized armies dogging their heels every step of the way.

Despite being made in 1982, Space Adventure Cobra possesses a manic energy and visual flare which make it appealing even today. The frantic and often bizarre action is helped along by some great voice acting, especially John Guerrasia's wisecracking performance as Cobra himself. Also notable is the music, which is re-sequenced especially for this release from Yello's Baby album and adds considerably to the stupid-but-fun feel of the film.

Fast-moving and livid with ideas, Space Adventure Cobra is a futuristic Bond film on acid. 'Serious' anime fans will hate it. The rest of us can sit back and enjoy.

P J EVANS

DOMINION TANK POLICE 9

MANGA VIDEO, MANV 1094, 28 mins approx, Cert PG

The new Dominion saga draws closer to its conclusion in this, the penultimate OAV in the series. Strap yourselves in - it could be a bumpy ride...

The rogue elements within the Dai Nippon Giken corporation have moved their plans into the final phase. A staged prison breakout ties up the Tank Police with a huge number of call-outs, as freed criminals wreak havoc on the city. Brenten leads his force in a little rapid reaction, but with no results other than collateral damage - how are the crooks in

question getting away so fast? It takes a run-in with the Puma twins for Leona and AI to realise the true purpose of the breakout, as the carnage is revealed to be nothing more than an elaborate smokescreen to conceal an attack on the Mayor herself, and the ultimate destruction of the Dai Nippon Giken corporate structure!

So far, the quality of this series has been going up and down like a fiddler's elbow. Part 9 is no exception: while 7 was a nicely-plotted little disaster movie, and 8 managed to miss the boat entirely, part 9 is right back on form. There's plenty going on and a lot of really nice tank stuff; something that's been sorely missed in the other episodes. Plenty of Pumas, too, although they spend the entire episode superglued to Bonaparte's front fender!

Pretty much uninterrupted action from start to finish, and completely lacking any form of statement, angst, or even cogent thought. Turn on, tune in, and giggle a lot.

P J EVANS

LEGEND OF THE 4 KINGS

Chapters 11 & 12, MANV 1087, Cert 12. £13.99

This concluding volume in the Legend of 4 Kings saga brings us another hour and a half of light-hearted fun. For a change the plot doesn't focus on attempts to control the dragon brothers. Instead it switches to examine their place in the cosmic scheme of things. Much of the action, especially in part 12 is centred around visionary sequences and visits to mysterious figures which watch over the four brothers. Plenty of long established plot-lines are also resolved. For example we get to see the fates of the mad German scientist Stronheim and the seriously disturbing arch-dissector Dr Tamazawa, but Lady 'L' is left somewhat in limbo. Much emphasis is also made of the relationship between the governments of Japan and the U.S. with the Four Sisters. The mystical links drawing and weaving in Matsuri, Shinkai, Mizuchi and Nijikawa are also finally explained.

In keeping with the series tone there is a fair bit of action; but it's mainly not told in a particularly nail biting way. Legend of the 4



Kings is typical television. It's definitely a case of sit down, turn on, switch off and say 'Hey that's cool' or 'No... that's daft'. And the ending? Well it's not clear cut. There's room for a sequel and plenty of people will be left slapping their foreheads and groaning - it certainly has a hint of soap opera about it.

ROBERT LYN DAVIES

PATLABOR 2

MANGA VIDEO, 107 mins, cert

Manga's release of this sequel follows hot on the heels of its progenitor with more of the same. Like the first movie, it's a wideranging technothriller with surprisingly little of its trademark giant robotry in evidence - even less than last time. Scriptwriter Kazunori Ito has taken a page out of Tom Clancy's book to craft a more political, less gadgeteering feature that deals with Government factionalism, the industrial-military combine and even resonances of Japanese nationalism in the wake of World War II, all wrapped in a clever, gripping scenario.

The tale is set three years after the first movie, circa 2002, with several of the PATLABOR cast split up in different jobs and locations. Predictably, Captains Goto & Shinobu are still set in their grooves, and it is they who provide the focus for the story's main narrative thrust. Shinobu's relationship with Tsuge, the antagonist, is the fulcrum for much of the plotting, as she and Goto (along with Detective Matsuri from the first film and an 'agency spook' named Arakawa) race to piece together Tsuge's ultimate plan.

Several thematic similarities are evident between PATLABOR THE MOVIE and PATLABOR 2. Both start with flashbacks, both feature elaborate revenge plots, both have a great deal of bird imagery; but in the first, the grand scheme was the crux, and in 2 it's a return to a strong character drama. There are a few moments of humour, largely from the rest of the cast, but on the whole its Shinobu and Goto's show. While the ending leaves two bare threads dangling, the plot is cohesive enough - even if it does bear a strong resemblance to the PATLABOR OAV two-parter 'Section Two's Longest Day'. The quality of the dubbing does much to propel the story, but the narrative does bog down in the more

wordy moments, points at which casual viewers may find attention flagging. Kenji Kawai's music score is nicely understated, if a little samey, and the visuals and set-pieces throughout the movie are excellent, bordering on the photorealistic. Many scenes occur during snowfalls and each captures that characteristic 'crystalline silence' perfectly. To conclude, this is a great thriller, and a brave release for M.E.L. - I sincerely hope their core audience appreciates it and looks for more of the same; but I find myself repeating what I said in my review of PATLABOR THE MOVIE, that this release might have been better served had Manga issued a few of the OAVs first. Perhaps if the movies fare well, they may be persuaded.

JIM SWALLOW

MACROSS PLUS Part Three

**MANGA VIDEO, MANV 1100,
Cert PG, 42 mins approx**

Manga Entertainment's fast-paced MACROSS PLUS saga enters the home straight with this penultimate chapter. The MACROSS milieu is perhaps the best archetype of the 'triple-play' anime shows, with the triple elements of hard-edged mecha action, attractive idol singers and romantic entanglements blended to create an engaging plotline. In MACROSS PLUS PART ONE we were treated to the mecha in a rocket-powered speed-trip through space battles and aerial combat; in PART TWO we got the idol singer in the form of enigmatic digital diva Sharon Apple; and now in PART THREE the spotlight turns on the tragic love triangle between maverick jet-jockey Isamu Dyson, his iceman rival Guld Goa Bowmann and their mutual target of affection Myung Lone, manager of CGI rock princess Sharon. In the aftermath of PART TWO's climax, where Bowmann trashed Dyson's YF-19 mecha with 'an accidental weapons discharge', Guld faces a Board of Inquiry with a hidden agenda, while Isamu heals in hospital. The three characters open up in this more introspective episode, and we get tantalising hints at their mutual history, which we saw in red-lit flashback in PART ONE. Things take a turn for the worse when the government cancels both Isamu's and Guld's fighter test programs, and as Myung's co-manager begins

his own deadly power games she heads back to Earth for Sharon's official debut concert at the 30-year anniversary celebrations for the Human-Zentraedi ceasefire. Isamu, desperate to disrupt the UN government's plans to replace human pilots with an A.I. mecha, hijacks the YF-19 (taking youthful hacker genius Yang along for the ride) and follows her; Guld's YF-21 is sent after him with shoot-to-kill orders and the stage is literally set for the final climax as Sharon Apple becomes sentient ...

JIM SWALLOW

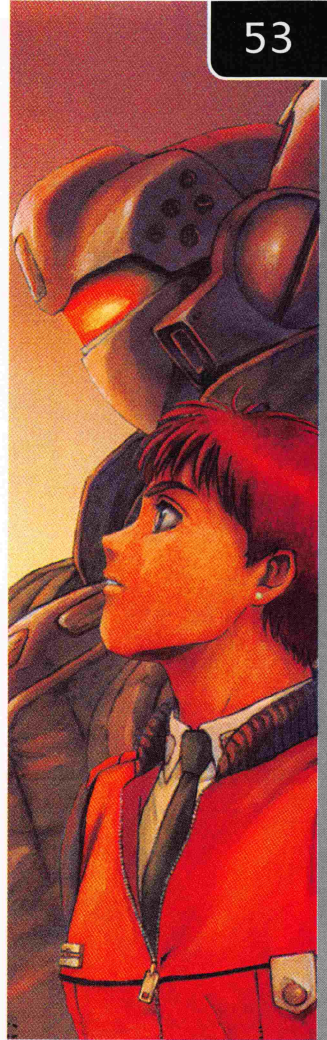
U.S.A. RELEASES

METAL FIGHTER MIKU VOL 1 (eps 1-3)

**SOFTWARE SCULPTORS,
SSVS-1001, 75 mins, English
subtitled**

Wow! This fastpaced frolic slams the opposition to the mat in no uncertain terms. I put the tape in the slot expecting a ho-hum, average sort of TV show; when the credits for the first episode rolled my one disappointment was that it had only run ten minutes. Then I realised the timer said twenty-five ... METAL FIGHTER MIKU's first three episodes deliver a frothy concoction of entertainment and excitement that's like nothing else on the video circuit right now. Cute teenager Miku is one of the Pretty Four, a girl's wrestling team starting out on the 21st century's women's circuit, where armoured suits have been added to spice up the action; but training is still tough and competition cut-throat. And as Miku dreams of one day fighting as well as her idol, the great wrestler Aquamarine, outside rivalries past and present complicate the picture and bring problems that have nothing to do with what goes on in the ring, including a drunken, abusive but brilliant coach and a steely businesswoman out to destroy the girls without entirely knowing why. The animation is not at all bad for a TV show but any minor shortcomings are easy to forgive when set against the sheer energy and enthusiasm of the whole show. If the momentum of the first three episodes is kept up Software Sculptors have a major hit on their hands. I can't wait for the next tape to arrive!

RORY DONNELLY



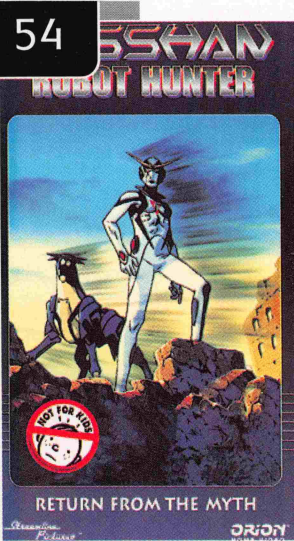
METAL FIGHTERS MIKU

In the year 2061, female wrestling
is the hottest sport to hit the scene!



Original Japanese dialogue with English subtitles

1



CASSHAN : ROBOT HUNTER (Part 1) RETURN TO THE MYTH

**STREAMLINE PICTURES VIDEO
COMICS/ORION, SLP-91383, 30
mins, English dubbed, mature
audiences**

A remake of a classic TV series is a common occurrence these days, with the trend for 'retro' anime still powerful and the realisation by many young animators that they can revisit their own childhood and make the shows they loved then with today's technology. This four-part OAV revision of the TV series of the same name takes us to a world where robots have risen and crushed their former masters, and now rule a world as cruel and harsh as any human totalitarian government ever managed to create. Most humans are enslaved but there are isolated pockets of resistance, and the legend passes from group to group of the Robot Hunter, Casshan, who will one day return to save mankind from its oppressors. Young resistance worker Luna, who once loved the boy who became Casshan, infiltrates the robot commander's strongest fortress to try and raise resistance there, but she is betrayed by a human slave. Will the lover she hasn't seen for three years return to rescue her from certain death? You bet he will, and inflict massive collateral damage to the robot fortress in the process. The pre-cyberpunk origins of the story show clearly in the hostile relationship of man to machine. Casshan has had to become part-robot to fight them, and in the TV series this was viewed as part of his tragedy; it will be interesting to see how the following three episodes handle this theme in a world in which a cyber-implant is a desirable fashion accessory. This is worth seeing; solid story values always stand the test of time. Don't be put off by the 'mature audiences' line; no tentacles and demons here, just some ripped clothing and exposed flesh.

HELEN MCCARTHY

BABEL II (Part 1) THE AWAKENING

**STREAMLINE PICTURES VIDEO
COMICS/ORION, SLP-91003, 30
mins, English dubbed**

Another remake of a classic series, based on a manga by SAINT SEIYA and SAMURAI TROOPERS creator Kurumada, has characters very much in the late 70s/early 80s idiom in a story which draws together psychics, charismatic cults, ancient history, United Nations incompetence and

alien intervention. Japanese schoolboy Koichi is pulled into the web by Juju, a psychic girl who has been sending out telepathic signals to him because she has recognised his latent powers and hopes they will be of use to her sinister 'Master'. Fellow cult member Wong is less welcoming, and almost kills Koichi before the boy's remarkable powers manifest themselves in a massive explosion of energy which destroys the surrounding area. But Koichi has now seen enough to convince him that joining the cult would be a bad move, but they don't take refusal lightly. Only the unexpected arrival of a huge dragon, a shape-shifting panther and a mighty amphibious robot enables him to get away from their headquarters, and as the dragon carries him over his former home he realises that his life has changed forever - because of the other voice in his head, the one which keeps calling him 'Babel II' and inviting him to fulfil his destiny and defend mankind from the forces of evil. Considering the level of action in this episode, the pace feels curiously slow, and the exaggeratedly retro designs are an acquired taste, but the story promises to develop in interesting directions.

HELEN MCCARTHY

HOMEROOM AFFAIRS Parts 1 & 2

**Star Anime Enterprises, SAE
001, 002, 43 mins approx
Part 1 not for minors under
18; part 2 not for children
under 15**

These two OAVs are based on Ichiro Arima's 1992 manga, published in Hakusensha's Young Animal Magazine and animated by JC Staff for JAM Creation two years later. The design is contemporary and pretty, the animation quite acceptable though fairly limited, and the highschool girl quotient high enough to please most male fans. The subtitles are not perfect but a few minor errors (like 'noting' for 'nothing', for instance) don't hinder comprehension. The main drawback is that director Osamu Sekita can't quite seem to decide whether he is making a sweet, romantic love story with risqué elements or a wet

dream video for solitary exercisers. This slows down the slight narrative about a headstrong, selfish but basically good-hearted teenager from an unstable family who is saved from going off the rails by the love of a 25-year-old virgin teacher at her school. The inevitable convenient billowing drapery/slipping towel/ other design device to cover the pubic area and render 'naughty' scenes innocuous gets quite irritating, but it's not shocking, scandalous or mould-breaking; in fact, as a wish-fulfilment fantasy for shy, unworldly males like its hero, HOMEROOM AFFAIRS is quite sweet. Just don't expect to get overexcited by anything about it.

RORY DONNELLY

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR VOL 1 (eps 1-3)

**SOFTWARE SCULTORS,
SSLM-3001, 80 mins, English
subtitled, US release on CD-ROM**

Here's one for computer freaks. The downside is that, of course, CD-ROM brings with it some loss of image quality as against good VT or LD; the upside is it plays in any computer that will run hybrid CD-ROM (Windows 3.1 or Mac) and thus bridges the video standards gulf which has so far kept many British fans out of the world of LODOSS. Plus, of course, you can play it on your computer. The story of a band of adventurers drawn together to fight for the future of their world, battling against evil and not always emerging victorious, is still the best rendition of the classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS-style RPG in anime, and if you love heroism, romance, swords and sorcery and battles against hopeless odds for shining dreams, you'll love this. Superb design work from Nobuteru Yuuki and Yutaka Izubuchi is a major plus.

HELEN MCCARTHY

Volume 1 Episodes:
1. Prologue to the Legend
2. Blazing Departure
3. The Black Knight

RECORD OF
LODOSS
WAR 1



Dragonball - The Legend Begins

(Columbia-Tristar, rental)

Shot on an apparently miniscule budget, this resembles the sort of thing a few friends with a video-camera might make, messing around on their weekends off, and coercing families and friends into appearing as extras. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing: among Western movies, both "Bad Taste" and "The Evil Dead" were basically shot this way, and "Dragonball" shares a lot of the same inventiveness and energy. When it can do, it does, when it can't, it makes a joke out of it. For example, there is a fight involving an obviously rubber crocodile, but the makers simply don't bother to take it seriously. Which is okay because, after all, no-one in the audience is going to.

Despite its name, the anime and manga are evoked more in spirit than in fact. All the characters undergo name changes, but most are recognisable enough: for example, "Turtle-man" should be familiar, right down to his manic lechery. Various incidents will also ring bells with the dedicated fan, in a story centering around the quest for seven legendary dragon pearls which when brought together will bring immortality, world domination - the usual sort of thing. Needless to say, bad guy Thorn is keen to get his hand

LIVE & KICKING

Jim McLennan



on them, and only our assorted heroes and heroines can stop him and his minions.

The start is sluggish, getting the plot and character introductions out of the way. Once that's done, things start to warm up, and rapidly get very silly. Even non-Dragonball fans will probably find the film's ridiculous brand of slapstick humour amusing - if not, then an alcoholic drink or two of your choice should do the trick. Imagine an episode of Power Rangers, without the annoying American interruptions, and you'll be in the right area.

Just don't expect anything even remotely approaching production values. It won't win any Oscars (even if it did, no-one would know to whom they should be given - the credits are basically non-existent), yet the cheapness of the whole thing is part of the film's undoubted charm.

Whether it's the lack of effort made to conceal the straps tying on Turtle-man's shell, or the neat way even the heroes refer to their opponents as "baddies", the film is the celluloid equivalent of a bumbling puppy. Best line: "He must have magic in those shorts"...

More "LIVE & KICKING"
on page 64



SOAP BOX



FAN TRANSLATIONS AND SUBTITLING - ILLEGAL, IMMORAL OR FATTENING?

Industry and otaku are equally involved in the biggest debate to hit the Western anime world for some time. Are fan subtitlers and translators saints or sinners, the foundation-stones of Western anime fandom or just tired old hacks who have had their day and now should be stamped out for the good of the rapidly-expanding industry? We asked you to send us your views.



PETER EVANS,
head of Away Team AFX, writes
from Sakura Studio, Tokyo, Japan :

BECAUSE ...

Why do fansubs exist? Several reasons, choose whichever you feel is most agreeable or least offensive to your distorted morals :

1. Fansubs exist so that we don't have to put up with adultery like that which created the bastard child ROBOTECH.
2. Fansubs help spread the word and the word is ANIME. (Not Japanimation, thank you very much.)
3. Fansubs bring us material that would otherwise never be released outside Japan. TV shows, old OAVs
4. Fansubbing created the American Otaku following that bore fruit with companies like AnimEigo.*
5. I want to watch anime, but I don't speak Japanese, nor will I make the effort to learn. I will get a fansub.
6. Fansubs are like samples ; if I like the sub, I may buy the real thing.
7. (This space left blank for you to fill in.)

Why do licensors of Japanese titles exist?

1. For love of what they do.
2. For the money. It's business.

INCENDIARY REMARKS

Recently there has been a lot of heated exchange on the Internet about 'fansubbing'. There's also a lot of noise about 'bootleggers' and 'piracy', but nothing seems to touch the hearts of American fans quite like a threat to their 'fansubs'. There are several camps and their views are quite dissimilar; incendiary comment in (brackets).

My email address is peter@gol.com: You have the right to remain silent, you have the right to seek expert legal advice, any mail or flames received may be used against you.

THE SUBBIES

These people will go to great lengths to defend their supposed rights. When threatened, they can be quite incendiary. They think it is right to make a copy of an original work and add subtitles, and it is also right to distribute these copies to all and sundry for the cost of tape and postage.

(Piracy or bootlegging is defined as making a profit [material gain] or causing a loss to the creators by not giving them their due, or some such. when you obtain a subtitled copy in exchange for, say, a blank tape, you fall into the latter category. When you obtain a copy of X in exchange for a copy of Y, you fall into the former category, even

though no money has changed hands. You now have a copy of X, which was something you wanted and therefore has value. Therefore you are a pirate.)

However, it is not worth arguing with this sort as they tend to be incredibly loud, sometimes abusive and very set in their ways. Such as the bright spark at some university that sent me 200+ emails full of frothingly unoriginal use of the f-word. Thank Goddess for procmail (an automated email filter), why should I waste my time on users** for free?

THE IMPECUNIOUS

A variation on the above. I can't afford to buy original anime because I am a poor student, with only three video recorders. Therefore I will collect copies and help proliferate them in order to support my habit. It is right to make copies because I can't afford the real thing. If I could afford it, I would buy originals, honest! Pigs do fly, look at my subtitled copy of PORCO ROSSO!

(Get real. Get off my case!)

However, such an attitude doesn't work. These characters can't understand why they should pay 7800 yen for a title when they can get a copy for free and with subtitles too! They attempt to justify themselves just as vigorously as the subbers. After all, it's not as if they are actually stealing anything, is it?

THE OTHERS

Subtitling anime off laserdiscs is all right, if you own the original too. Distributing your copy is not allowed, but as long as it is for your personal entertainment, no problem.

(They are rare. Too rare.)

THE INDUSTRY

Certain producers and licensors in the US have formed a group called JAILED, complete with a lawyer. They plan to start on bootleggers, I believe. They might well argue that they go to a lot of effort to negotiate, translate and produce this stuff. It is non-trivial. They don't appreciate the fansubbers doing them out of their livelihood, regardless of good intentions.

THE ANNOYING ONES

Subtitles? What's up, don't understand Japanese?

(We are few, we are self-centred and smug. Some of us live in Japan!)

Some of us have put a lot of time, effort and money into learning the language. Certain luminaries have even become professional translators. If you spend weeks translating something from the original script, you are hardly going to be pleased at the fansubbers, are you?

OH, AND BY THE WAY ...

To the bright spark who said 'Don't be such a stinking pompous heretic. I bet you have some fansubs too!' only not so politely, the answer is : I do not have in my possession any illegal copies. I don't do subs, I don't even do dubs. The only tapes I have are sample tapes supplied for review purposes. I buy originals on LD, so get off my case, user!

* The company that brought you BUBBLEGUM CRISIS and USUREI YATSURA TV, and maybe some other titles too. There is a breed of fan out there that believes that BUBBLEGUM CRISIS is utterly the greatest anime ever! worse, some of them know that it is the only anime! (Perhaps if I ignore them they will go away?)

** USER, play on 'loser' and 'user'. A large percentage of flamers on the Internet.

ROBIN SMITH

of Lichfield, Staffordshire, UK, writes :

As you're no doubt aware there's been a veritable hornets nest stirred up un the USA by the activity of at least one employee of a U.S. company (W+H+Y+) and by the formation of the JAILED organisation. For those who don't know about this, JAILED is an organisation subscribed to by most of the major players in the US anime market. JAILED's stated objective is to protect the copyrights of the US license holders.

There was, and still is, a lot of speculation by fans on rec.arts.anime (this is an internet newsgroup dedicated to anime) about the actions that JAILED would carry out. One of the major concerns voiced was that JAILED would pursue those fans who make subtitled tapes from the Japanese originals for the benefit of Japanese impaired fans. JAILED responded with an announcement that looked like this would not be the case, however it was cunningly worded to carefully avoid saying anything specifically along these lines.

So, who would you think that JAILED would go after :

- (a) fan subtitlers making copies, minimal charge made (in most cases),
- (b) fans translating the original Japanese (mostly free)
- (c) bootlegger/pirates running off copies, selling for profit?

Well, so far JAILED have gone for option (b), presumably to remove the material used by options (a) and (c). One could say it is analogous to the fight against the drugs situation, you cut off the source and then go for the distribution network.

Having hopefully laid the groundwork, I'll now come to the point of my ramble. The sale of licensed goods means :

1) money goes back to the Japanese authors, artists and studios;

2) the licensee gets their slice of the cake.

I agree wholeheartedly with both the above ends, as together they result in more new anime/manga for us all to enjoy; now comes the 'however'.

I would not be involved with anime were it not for the actions of the fans who translate and subtitle for the benefit of Japanese impaired fans like myself. The upshot of this is 60+ sales would have been lost, small potatoes I hear people cry. I'll leave you with these two thoughts...

How many people got involved in anime in this way?

At least one major CEO began this way...

Just my biased 4 credits' worth, & I hope to see you at reConTanimeTed 95.

SUE SHAMBAUGH

of Clinton, MD, USA, writes :

JAILED - friend or foe? One translator's opinion

During the last 15 years, we anime fans have seen our hobby grow from a small subset of SF fandom into an attempted breakthrough into the mainstream video market. I suppose that with this growth some changes in the nature of fandom were inevitable, but lately things have taken an ugly turn for the worse. I am talking about the recent assault by industry on fan translating and fan subtitling. J.A.I.L.E.D., the brainchild of Lopa Mukharjee, who is the marketing representative of VIZ Communications, is a non-profit organization formed with the stated aim of cracking down on video piracy (sales of bootleg tapes) at conventions and elsewhere. But the actions and attitudes of some of its member companies have already put the lie to this avowed purpose. Allow me, a 12-year fan translator of moderate renown, to relate one such incident.

On Thursday March 23 1995 I received a phone call from Lopa. What I was told by this official industry spokesperson astonished me. She told me that my translations were 'highly illegal'. Stating that "Viz IS Shogakukan", she said that they intend to fully protect, worldwide, all of Shogakukan's trademarked animation and manga products. Further, she said that these products would be protected (and this is the kicker) WHETHER OR NOT there is any intent on Viz's part ever to release their own English-language version. In other words, I was an "unlicensed translator" and had no right to translate ANY Shogakukan product into English without Viz's permission.

Convinced that fan translating activities are costing them "millions of dollars a year". Lopa said that they intend to crack down on them whether or not money is charged for them. When I pointed out that there are plenty of translations provided to fans anonymously via FTP site, she said they were going to go after those as well. She even went so far as to ask me to get on the Internet and ask people to remove the translations.

One quote from her lecture should be of interest to anyone who has ever enjoyed a fan subtitled tape ; "Sue, you can translate any of our products you wish, as long as it is strictly for personal pleasure. But the minute you show it to another person, that act is a violation of our trademark." No mention was made of video piracy or sales.

This is just my personal example of a member company of J.A.I.L.E.D. pursuing a private agenda on the side. There are plenty of others. For instance, why was a fan artist singled out at a recent San Diego area convention, and his pictures of Nadia confiscated? Why are fan translators being targetted instead of the video pirates themselves? Why are fans who subtitle receiving cease and desist letters? Why are member companies compiling "hit lists" of fan translation and subbing groups?

Many theories have been put forward about why this is happening now. The most likely explanation is that, in order to stop video pirates from selling fan-subs, they intend to choke off the source of supply by intimidating as many fan translators as possible. This is unlikely to succeed. I know of no fan translator who would knowingly sell OR give one of their works to a video bootlegger, myself included. The reason is simple ; if we don't profit by our works, why should we let a pirate do so? And most producers of fan-subs these days fill their scripts with anti-pirating warnings and similar messages. J.A.I.L.E.D. members are, quite simply, targetting the wrong people. None of us can control what other people choose to do with our work.

Another theory is that, since the recent recession, and because the mainstream anime/manga fad is waning due to market saturation, their sales simply aren't meeting projected or promised goals. Unable to face facts - bad economy and some poor quality product lines - they search for scapegoats. We are, simply put, an easy target. Much easier than actual video bootleggers, who tend to ignore cease and desist letters anyway. Never mind that we've been shutting down bootleggers at conventions for 10 years without their prodding.

There is a glaring contradiction in the companies' attitudes towards fans. On the one hand, many claim we aren't an important segment of their market, since they're aiming for mainstream English-speaking audiences. (This is convenient when devising excuses to fans for deviating from accurate translations.) But on the other hand, we are somehow simultaneously supposed to be a huge Force of Evil, draining away their profits via production and trading of fan-subs. I think they had better make up their collective mind, one way or another - are we a force to be reckoned with, or aren't we? You can't have it both ways!

Fan subtitles never make it to mainstream video outlets, so they don't constitute a threat to companies' stated target audience, period. Consumers of fan translations own original Japanese products, and simply want a more accurate and uncut product than would-be mainstream companies are willing to provide. Indeed, fan translations are useless to the general public, as they are geared towards the "otaku" market. I know of no fan translator who attempts to profit from their work, whether money is charged to cover costs or not. They are not unfair competition; they are a typical, condoned sf fan activity. And, since no fan translation contains the original art or video, infringement is simply not a realistic issue. Translators own their own works.

The vast majority of fans translations are of works that will, sadly, never make it into the world of licensed English releases. There is no valid reason to outlaw fan subtitles of these, and no legal way to crack down even if pirates decide to sell them, when no licensing company owns the rights. Hence, they resort to intimidation of fan translators, regardless of the fact that, for many fans, this is the only English-language exposure they will get to some very interesting works.

Even fan translations of licensed works are useful, for there are always going to be fans who accept only Japanese originals and who will never care for watered-down product. Fan subtitles of these works help to keep those in the industry honest by promoting among them an ethic of continuing improvement of their product line for the discriminating "otakus" among us! From where else will come the pressure to provide liner notes and other proofs of an extra effort to please all of us?

Fan art, although it may depict a trademarked character, is virtually never mistaken for the real thing. Fan artists, proud of their work, sign it. I think it would be a pretty poor convention where the only pieces allowed in the art show were

original Japanese cels, most of which would not be for sale. What's next? No "unlicensed" fanzines or newsletters? No club T-shirts?

Unfortunately, this anti-fan attitude on the part of the industry has been a long time in the making. For example, once upon a time, Neil Nadelman, a pro translator, was publicly slammed by a well known editor for volunteering to take part in a fan subtitling project of the popular, unlicensed TV series ZETA GUNDAM. Accusations flew across the Internet about her trying to ruin Neil's career. Why must any translator feel pressured to ignore the fan activities that got them into the industry in the first place?

I find it particularly repugnant that this type of harassment is coming from an industry that has, historically, made free use of fan translations, with neither credit nor payment rendered. A hypocritical stance among licensing companies towards the fans who helped to make this medium as popular as it is, is not going to win them any friends. It is disrespectful of them to assume we are not going to sit up and take notice when they are biting the hands that feed them. More action on the REAL problem - bootleggers who sell pirated copies of licensed videos via cons, stores and mail-order - would bring the J.A.I.L.E.D. group up to speed with fan activity in that arena!

Acknowledgement of fan contributions to the industry is long overdue.

So, to sum up my basic philosophy : fan translating and subtitling built this market for the companies, and they are foolish to think they can attempt to wipe it out now without serious repercussions. None of them would be in business today if early fan activities hadn't paved their way. And I think a little show of gratitude on the part of the companies to us fans who have generally supported their efforts wouldn't hurt either.

HELEN : In case any bootleggers reading this try to use Sue's sincerely held opinions as an excuse for their nefarious works, I must point out that she is mistaken in law on a vital point. Simply because a foreign work is not licensed for sale outside its territory of origin, that does NOT mean that anyone has the legal right to translate and sell it. Foreign works have the protection of the International Copyright Convention and their legal owners in the country of origin can pursue claims for breach of copyright in any country signatory to the Convention. International copyright protection extends to all countries which are signatories of the ICC.

Dear ANIME UK,

I've been thinking for months that I should write in about a few things in the magazine, and now I've some current broadcasting developments to report on as well, so here goes.

I've found plenty of interesting items and information in your new-look issues. I was particularly grateful for the LUPIN III article with the episode guide; now I can identify some of those Italian and French episodes more accurately, and I know where in the episode sequence to start (as a hopeless Goemon fan) collecting the first series should it ever turn up!

The article on ZYURANGER was also most welcome. I'd been distracting myself from the worse elements of POWER RANGERS by speculating on what the original Japanese cast looked like, and now I know. The trouble is, I now have a new addiction/love interest - I want (WANT!!!) to see the episodes of ZYURANGER featuring Burai ...

Has anyone yet mentioned, or noticed, the astonishing crop of anime (well, okay, about 6 shows, but that is a vast amount in UK broadcasting terms) recently to be found on a couple of satellite channels? By now half of them have disappeared again, more's the pity, but at weekends the Children's Channel were showing both THE MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD and THE NEW ADVENTURES OF GIGANTOR (the colour IRONMAN 28 series; quite well dubbed into English, though using few voice actors, and with good informative end credits). Unfortunately I discovered the latter in time to see only two episodes, that'll teach me to decide not to check the TV guide because I fear I won't have time to watch anything new that IS on! Meanwhile the German channel RTL2, on weekday afternoons, is/has been offering :

1) LADY OSCAR (ROSE OF VERSAILLES) - the historical classic, complete with original end credits pictures (and a new German theme song, but a nice one), full credits information, and even the trailers for the next episode! Scheduled Monday at 1.40 p.m., but finished now.

2) ROBIN HOOD - I don't know the exact Japanese title, but a video compilation was released here some years ago as ROBIN HOOD THE BOYHOOD ADVENTURES, and it's done by Ippei Kuri in Cute mode; this should tell you pretty much what to expect regarding the heroes' ages. [NB : not to be confused with YOUNG ROBIN HOOD, currently showing on the Children's Channel on Saturday mornings, which is a fairly forgettable American (or Canadian?)/French production.] No credits are being

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If you'd like a personal reply please enclose a self-addressed envelope with UK postage, or two International Reply Coupons for overseas postage. Please note that our Post Office will not accept foreign stamps for postage of replies from the UK.

broadcast other than the name of the German studio and director presumably responsible for the translated version - grrr! Sadly the best thing in the show, a stylish Honourable Villain named Gilbert, has now died heroically, so I've stopped watching it, but it's still scheduled on weekdays at 2.10 p.m. British time.

3) Z FOR ZORRO - I checked this one out from simple curiosity about another version of the Zorro legend rather than knowing it was an anime series; I didn't, and was pleasantly surprised. Since RTL2 are broadcasting no more credits than for ROBIN HOOD, though, I still have no exact information on the show. It looks recent - slightly reminiscent of SAILOR MOON in style, and with many scenes drawn on the cheap (no shading, etc!) - but is well worth watching. Plots vary from excellent to, well, eccentric, and I'd rate it about four out of ten for attention to historical detail, the usual one out of ten for badly drawn horses, and nought out of ten for introducing cute sidekick 'Little Zorro', but a nine out of ten for authentic Spanish zarzuela music, the same for love interest Lolita's courage and competence (and Diego's gormless expression!) and a straight ten for Zorro's impressive dress sense and fighting moves. Scheduled weekdays at 2.40

pm British time.

4. ROCK'N'COP - I know; "eh what?" Another lucky find, this; I caught a trailer for it one day between the earlier shows, and it is none other than an older favourite of mine, Tatsunoko's URASHIMAN. (Another Ippei Kuri job - what is he, flavour of the month in Germany?) It's shown with informative credits which attribute the new music and Western distribution to Saban & Levy, begging the question of why, if this popular show has been translated into English, nobody in anime fandom has mentioned the fact yet. Actually I've noticed a distinct trend of certain translated shows (even live action ones made in English) arriving on the German satellite channels months before the English language ones deign to run them ... If the German translation has come via an English version, I'm impressed, for there are few character name changes, which argues that there's been relatively little mucking about with the translation generally. Scheduled most weekdays at 3.35 pm. British time.

One word of warning about the above list : I am using the term "scheduled" advisedly. RTL2's timing seems to be VERY erratic! If you want to be sure of catching complete episodes of any or all of their anime offerings, it's a good idea to

switch on about twenty minutes earlier, and plan to run on at least half an hour later, than the times given in the TV GUIDE. It's annoying to have to do this, especially when there's so much presenters' non-sense in between the shows, but obviously as this is "children's" viewing, nobody really cares whether anything starts or finishes on time.

I can thoroughly recommend watching anime in German - they always seem to do a good translation job (as far as I can tell, knowing little Japanese, but the German versions usually feel right and lack the banality of some English dialogue I could mention). The voice actors seem to get into their roles well, and there's been no obvious cutting in any shows I've seen in their German incarnations.

Finally, I read something in a recent issue of THE ROSE that made me realise I am now a truly ancient anime fan. The writer referred to SAINT SEIYA as an "old" show - and I can remember when it was THE hot NEW one! Hold on while I fetch my Zimmer frame, then I'll go and get this in the mail ...

Animatedly (but decrepitly) yours,
JAY FELTON, Leyton, London, England

HELEN : *Hella Kroeger also wrote about ROBIN HOOD (and in particular Gilbert) with enthusiasm - I'm sorry to have missed him ... Thanks for all the useful info, but I'm afraid you're a long way back in the queue to collect your otaku pension credits. You can't POSSIBLY be a crumbly yet - you didn't have to pretend you were only watching ASTRO BOY to keep your kids company on the first run!*

Dear AUK,
I've been buying the magazine since March when it was re-released, I think your magazine covers good stories, such as DRAGONBALL and GUYVER. I also buy MANGA MANIA, which is also cool. Me and my friend Mark would like to ask something about the NEW POWER RANGERS. The Japanese version says that there is a 7th Ranger with a turtle. But this Ranger was not in the American version! Why? Hope you can answer our question. - **KRIS LETCH**, Nottingham, UK

HELEN : *Maybe they thought that American TV viewers had had enough of martial arts shows with turtles to last them well into the next century? Seriously, I don't know. The company might have thought the character wouldn't appeal to American audiences, or just that it complicated the plotline unnecessarily to have another major character. You'd have to write to Saban, who make NEW POWER RANGERS, to get the right answer!*



Konnichiwa Helen and company, Well, what can I say? I was compelled to buy your first issue after you relaunched in March and have been buying ever since. I recently bought a copy of RANMA 1/2 for the SNES, and after playing this decided to try to get my hands on a version of DRAGONBALL Z. Where is the best place to get this and other import games from? And do I need an adaptor for the game? If so, how much are they? I would be very grateful if you could answer these questions. Mata ne, JAMES TARRANT, Ipswich, Suffolk, UK

Dear Helen,
First off, thanks for making the magazine a monthly publication. Your guide to DRAGONBALL Z has proved indispensable to me in my quest to become a DRAGONBALL addict. Do you know where I could get hold of the SD GUNDAM game for the SNES? I've just seen the anime and I think it's the best thing since OTAKU NO VIDEO! See you at MINAMI CON '95.
LEE

BUR-
BIDGE,
Southsea, Hants., UK

HELEN: More and more people are asking about import games. It's difficult to say which of all the many importers in Britain is the 'best'. Computer Exchange at 32 Rathbone Place, London W1P 5AD, tel 0171 636 2666, has had favourable reviews from people I know, but your best bet is to get a magazine like SUPER PLAY, look at the ads, and ring round to check prices and availability for what you want. You'll gradually find which places consistently get the games you want and whose style of doing business you like. And when it comes to adaptors, take the advice of a specialist magazine or shop rather than a console novice like me!

Konnichiwa Anime UK,
First of all, I'd like to say how much I'm enjoying ANIME UK. Your indepth articles on individual titles such as THE GUYVER, DRAGONBALL, MACROSS and even SLOW STEP, are impressive.

Secondly, in your A TO Z OF ANIME you couldn't find anything to fit Q, X and Z. However I have a couple of suggestions for X and Z.

Z is for ZEGUY, anime about a time-travelling schoolgirl. X is for X-1999, manga from Studio Clamp. Although it is manga, I thought it would have been worth mentioning as it comes from Studio Clamp. In fact, I was quite surprised that they were not mentioned as they gave us RG VEDA and TOKYO BABYLON!

Thirdly, have you any plans to do an article on the various voice actors (seiyuu) whether collectively or as individuals. I think the terrific Norio Wakamoto who was Coach Ota in GUNBUSTER would warrant an individual article.

Carry on the award-winning work!
Sayonara,
EMMA JANE WALTON, Edmonton,
London, UK

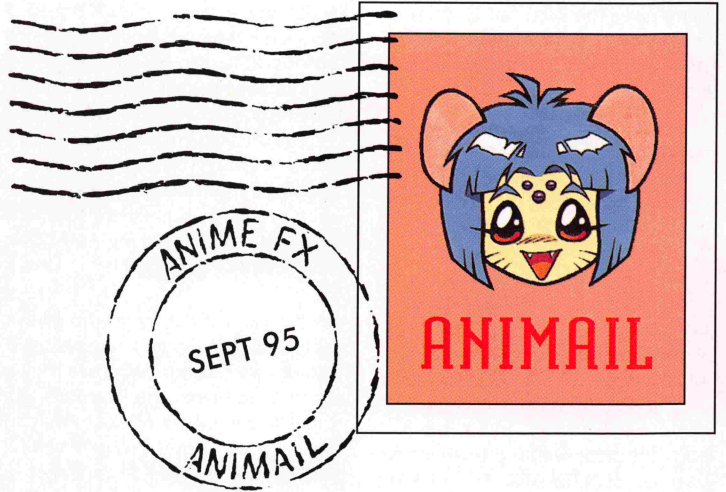
HELEN: Steve missed the CLAMP team out of his listing by pure oversight - there was so much material to include that it was inevitable that a few important entries would be overlooked!

ZEGUY doesn't fit his category for ANIME TITLES, being the Japanese title although the subtitle has been omitted for UK release. We are already being asked when the expanded book-length version of the A TO Z OF ANIME will appear, so all such suggestions are welcome.

Dear Helen,

In issue 3 in reply to Brian Tung's letter you stated that there are no English-dubbed DBZ videos available. There are! I have a PAL dubbed version of QUEST FOR THE EARTH, aka SUPER DECISIVE BATTLE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD, released by Speedy Video who are based in Malaysia. I don't know if they do any other dubbed DBZ videos. Anyway, their full address is SPEEDY VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS SDN. BHD., 29 & 31, Jalan 1/76, Desa Pandan, Jalan Kampung Pandan, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

This is the address on the back of the video cover.
If anyone does write, I don't know what kind of response they will get (if any!) as my friend got the tape for me while he was there on holiday.



ADRIAN SKIDMORE, Harrow,
Middx., UK

HELEN: I don't know if this will really help Brian much with his DBZ quest - the tape may not be still available, the company may not do mail order, and they are almost certainly not licensed to sell the tape in the UK - but thanks for the address, information on Japanese video licensees outside the UK is always useful. If anyone does write to Speedy Video and gets a catalogue or list, please let us all know!

Dear Helen,

Could you tell me when lots of anime soundtracks will be released? I already have the two AKIRA ones and a DRAGONBALL Z one from Japan! Will there be another film of the great anime AKIRA adapted from the original story?
JAMIE PAGE, Brighton, Sussex,
England.
P.S. Say hello to Spongly!

HELEN: Lots of anime soundtracks will be released when British record companies, importers and distributors wake up to the fact that there is a lot of great music in anime and start importing or licensing it from Japan. Why not write to the companies that release your favourite videos and ask them if they will bring out the soundtrack? And as for AKIRA, the existing film was adapted from the manga. I think perhaps you're wondering if anyone will film the entire manga story, just as it was written, and the answer to that is probably not. Just think how long the original manga is - it would be ruinously expensive to animate it and the result would be many hours long, a TV series rather than a film. Still, anything is possible!

Dear Helen & team,
I enjoy drawing manga and anime-style and I would like to add colour to my pictures, but as of yet I have

not found any suitable paints. Can you please tell me where they might be sold and what kind of paints are used?

Jonathan Soellner, Exeter, Devon,
UK.

PS Can I have Ne-Chan's phone number?

HELEN: If you are painting onto cels - ie clear film sheets - you can get special cel paint. Look for a really good art shop near you, or if you have an art college in the area ask if they have an animation department and ask them where they buy cel paint. You can also use acrylic paints; these are not made for the job but I know several fan artists who use them for cel painting with good results. Again, any good art shop will stock a range of acrylic paints. For painting artwork on paper, any medium that will give a smooth, flat finish is fine. Our own Steve Kyte uses gouache and coloured inks on stretched paper or illustration board for most of his artwork. Ne-Chan says she is very flattered by your interest but she's far too busy to take personal calls at the office, and her mother told her that nice mice never give their home number to strange boys.

Dear Ms McCarthy,

I'm not sure that it's fair to rag on the UK and say Britain doesn't have a viable animation industry, especially if you're going to use Japan as a benchmark. Any nation's animation industry would look small compared to Japan's. It may not be fair to make comparisons to America either. Here in the US I recall that for most of the 70s and 80s there wasn't much in animation to brag about. There was the typical TV pabulum and lackluster attempts from a demoralized Disney studio. Of course some animators, like Ralph Bakshi, tried to push the medium in new directions, but with only limited success. It's only been

in the past few years that animation has had a resurgence in the US, but this may be as much a fluke as anything else. The fact that Britain lacks a bustling animation industry could be largely just a case of bad luck.

For example : Disney could have made a film such as ALADDIN 20 years ago, but they didn't because at the time no-one thought that an 'animated musical' like ALADDIN would sell. Entertainment is financed by what is perceived as being 'in', so a certain amount of sheer luck plays a large role in which films get financial backing. THE LITTLE MERMAID was a big commercial success, but if it had bombed there would probably have been no BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, no ALADDIN and no LION KING. Animation is 'hip' right now, but only as a marketing pigeonhole like sci-fi, action or drama. This contrasts to Japan where animation isn't just a type of movie, but an industry in itself. Ralph Bakshi commented along the lines that a studio could make 10 live action flops and think nothing of it, but if one animated movie flops it's blamed for being animated. Japan has a big enough animation industry that films can hit the skids and not discredit the whole medium. The case isn't the same elsewhere. If 'animated musicals' like ALADDIN stop being chic, then American animation could well fall by the wayside for another 20 years.

Film-makers have to secure a string of early successes in order to prove their viability and survive. In the early days any industry lives hand to mouth and it isn't until that industry becomes more established that it can take bigger chances and absorb the losses. Walt Disney took a huge risk when he made SNOW WHITE and it could be argued that if that film had flopped not only would Disney have folded, but much of the animation we have today all over the world would not exist. British animators are stuck in the same boat; their first few films will either make or break the company and perhaps the whole industry. So, relatively speaking, Britain may not be doing so poorly after all. The films of Martin Rosen (WATERSHIP DOWN, 1978, THE PLAGUE DOGS, 1982) should not be forgotten and Aardman stand poised to do great things. With some luck we may see more films from British animators. We'll just have to see what the market will bear.

MICHAEL MINNOTT, San Clemente, CA, USA

Dear AUK,
I'm writing about a subject that is close to all (UK) anime fans' hearts : censorship. I never really thought about it until I watched what was

left of ADVENTURE DUO (Kid). This film was absolutely slaughtered to the point of being unwatchable. According to the Kiseki Club mag, Episode 1 was cut from 45 mins to 28! Kiseki had to pay for the privilege of seeing their newly acquired film shredded! You reckon that the 17 cut minutes had nothing to do with the plot? To make it even worse (is that possible?) you can even see the jumps where they've edited! It's like watching AMAZON WOMEN IN THE MOON!

What I want to know is who gives the BBFC the right to say what we can or can't watch? Who are they to say if I can watch the infamous 'gun rape' scene in GUY or not? What's it going to do to me? I've watched PULP FICTION and I haven't shot



anyone in the face with a pistol. I've watched URUSEI YATSURA and I've never felt the urge to dress in a tigerskin bikini and fly about town! (Well ...)

The BBFC claim that censorship is for our benefit. So, that means that the scenes they leave in films must be OK? It's OK that Kaneda races on the freeway and beats up members of a rival gang, is it? It's OK that Akemi gets raped about four times during the course of UROTSUKIDOJI? The BBFC can't be doing a very good job of protecting us if these images are left for us to model ourselves on.

People complaining about sex and violence must be the only supporters of the BBFC. But isn't it painfully obvious that if you find these things insulting or disturbing then simply DON'T WATCH IT! The blurb on the back of the video will tell you if it's going to be violent or explicitly sexual. I'm sure some people have bought UROTSUKIDOJI just to complain about it!

And now, having read your review of the amazingly cool GUN SMITH CATS, it looks as if the same thing is going to happen to manga. What is the point of raising Minnie May's

age from 17 to 18? It may have escaped some people, but Minnie May isn't a real person. (She looks about 12 anyway.) Who is it going to disturb if she is 17? Minnie is a bomb expert. She spends all of her time blowing people and cars up! Is this acceptable behaviour for an 18 year old but not for a 17 year old?

Is there any way we could make anime exempt from classification and remain uncut? I doubt it!

Anyway, that's my moaning done! Bai bai

JAMIE WOODHEAD, Combe Martin, North Devon, UK.

P.S. : A compilation of AUK issues 1-6 would be really cool! Do it!

HELEN : And this was even BEFORE you heard about the BBFC's prob-

lems with KEKKO KAMEN! But the BBFC isn't just a self-appointed body; the Government are the people to blame here, I'm afraid, for deciding that we will continue to enjoy the most heavily censored visual media in the Western world. Translated manga like GUNSMITH CATS are slightly different because they are mostly prepared for the US market; the decision to alter text or pictures isn't made by anyone in this country but by the American translators and publishers, usually to avoid the possibility of getting retailers into trouble in some of the more restrictive States where people can be jailed for selling 'obscene material'.

Dear Helen,
Firstly, love the new look and title! "ANIME FX" - anime fix more like! (Once a month is not enough.) Please could you help me, I've been trying for 3 months to get some NTSC anime tapes (A.D. Vision, USMC, Anime 18). Why can't I get them anywhere in the UK? Is it against the law to import violent or adult anime tapes? What is the Customs' view? And can you recom-

mend me a US retailer who will accept my money? I've tried 5 and had no replies from any. Please answer my letter as I'm sure I'm not alone in my quest for uncut anime in a society where we are treated like kids.

Yours Otakunisingly,

ANDY MARSHALL, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, UK

HELEN : It's easy to recommend a US retailer : NIKAKU ANIMART at 615 N 6th St., San Jose, CA 95112, USA, tel (408) 971 2822, offer the best mail order service I have ever encountered anywhere in the world. Bill and Ai Kogura run a friendly, service-oriented store with an excellent stock. They accept major credit cards and bankers drafts and usually send out items in stock within a couple of days. I know a few US retailers don't like to do overseas mail order, but in general, provided you enclose a couple of IRCs for their reply or catalogue, and pay them in their currency (they can't cash UK bank cheques in £ without huge penalties and £ money orders are useless to them!), most US retailers will do their best to help you. Look through your back issues of AUK and you'll find lots of addresses. You can't buy NTSC tapes in the UK because many retailers don't have a high enough demand to make it worth their while, and because many shops do have problems with the legal authorities if they put certain material on their shelves. It's also illegal to distribute a film which has not been certificated by the BBFC in this country, although this is a somewhat hazy area as far as enforcement goes. I suggest you try some specialist shops, such as Anime Projects in Bangor, Gwynedd, Sheffield Space Centre, or Forbidden Planet London, and see if they can help you out by special-ordering the tapes you want. Or why not find American pen-pals and swap material with them? They can buy the tapes you want in the USA, you can get them items they want from the UK. World peace through shared popular culture, as those nice people at Central Park Media say!

As if you didn't know, all Animail pics are from the new DOMINION series, currently available in the UK from Manga Video. For a review of the latest instalment turn to page 52

THERE IS ONLY ONE

because we only have one copy of this rare and very beautiful collector's limited edition of ROBOTECH ART 3 to give away. Number 661 of an edition of 1,000 signed by Carl Macek himself, this is essential reading for every ROBOTECH fan, and the one who'll be enjoying it is **Ms. K. SOLEY of Northolt, Middlesex, UK.**

We asked you to name Rick Hunter's girlfriends in ROBOTECH. The answer, of course, was Lisa Hayes and Lynn Minmay. Misa Hayase and Lin Minmei were Hikaru Ichijo's girlfriends in CHOJIKU YOSEI MACROSS, which is, of course, a different series. Many thanks to the good folk at KISEKI FILMS, who donated the book. They are behind ROBOTECH's UK release; ask for the tapes in all good video shops or contact Kiseki direct on 0181 741 2203.

THIS ISSUE'S COMPETITIONS

QUEEN OR GODDESS?

We know you love cels so we have two more for you. These are unusual in that they're our first copy cels. They were made by Pioneer

Animation and AIC as duplicates of production cels from one of their most popular series, AAA MEGAMISAMA, and their latest hit, EL HAZARD. The line work was copied onto the cels from the original inbetween drawing and the cel was painted by hand, in exactly the same way as the production cel, and only a very few copies of each production cel was made.

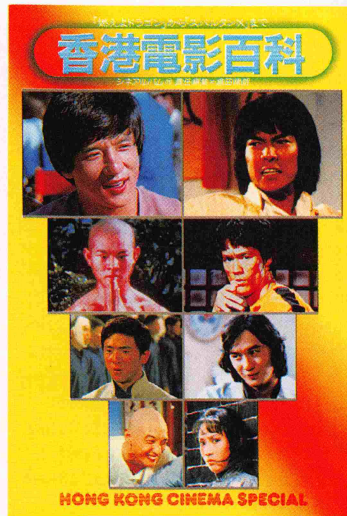
The AAA MEGAMISAMA copy cel shows everyone's favourite Goddess, Belldandy, looking very anxious. It's a gorgeous facial close-up with her hands almost covering her mouth. The EL HAZARD cel depicts the lovely Queen Lune Venus and two of her handmaidens at half length.

To win one of these desirable objects, send us a postcard with just one name on it; the name of the writer and creator of EL HAZARD. Well, OK, two names actually, because if you don't tell us who you are and where you live, we won't know who to send the prize to! And let us know which cel you'd prefer. First correct answers out of the hat on 30th September win the cels.

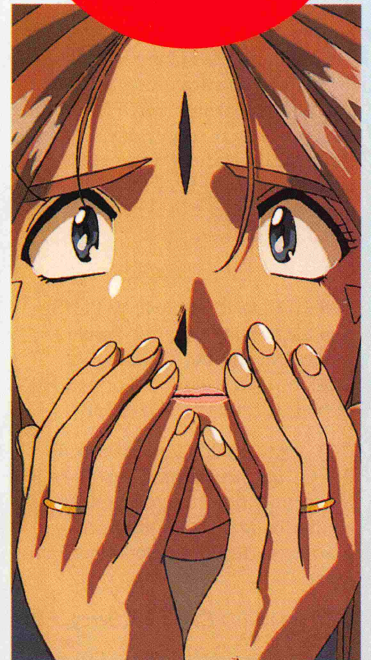
HONG KONG FOOEY

We have a stunning Japanese book on Hong Kong Cinema to give away. The CINE ALBUM NO. 110, HONG

KONG CINEMA SPECIAL is packed with pics in colour and black and white, including on-set shots of greats like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan and poster reproductions. The text is mostly Japanese but includes English-language title listings and an actor index. To win it, all you have to do is tell us which wellknown martial arts star played the lead in the Hong Kong version of Tsukasa Hojo's manga and anime hit CITY HUNTER. Answers on a postcard with your name and address to reach us by 30th September 1995 please. As usual, the first right answer out of the bag wins.



CONTEST CORNER



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CREDIT CARD & INFORMATION HOTLINE
01291-621700



CONVENTION AND MEETING LISTINGS

We will list all conventions with a significant anime/manga programme content providing we receive information in writing at least three months before the convention date. The date and name of the convention are followed by the contact address and major guests. We also list regular anime club meetings notified to us with a contact name and address or number. Please note that we cannot supply any further information about these events or accept registrations - for that, you need to contact the organisers at the address listed.

EUROPE

SEPT 21 LONDON ANIME CLUB regular evening meet at Daiwa Japan Foundation, contact 37a Station Road, Hendon, London NW4 4PN, UK, tel 0181 202 9038.

OCT 1 FACTS IV, Parkplein 5, B-9000 Gent, Belgium. Guests: Helen McCarthy, more tba. Games, sf, anime/manga, toys, video programmes, dealers, talks. Meet more fans!

OCT 14-15 BD EXPO 95, Bercy, Paris.

NOV 3-5 RECONTANIMATED, L. Sharman, 13 Prescott Close, Banbury, Oxon, OX, UK, email denzil@chisaii.demon.co.uk or davidrow@ryooohki.demon.co.uk. Guests tba, games, dealers, 3 video rooms, masquerade, art show.

NOV 24-26 BENELUXCON 21-GRAPHICON 1995; The Art of Illustration. SF-BELGIUM, Zandkapelweg 18, 2200 Noorderwijk, Belgium. Guests: Raoul Servais (animator), Ian Watson, James White (authors), Karel Biddeloo, Eddy C. Bertin (comics) & more.

USA

SEPT 1-4 OTAKON 1995, 661-A Waupelani Drive, State College, PA 16801, USA. Guests Toren Smith, Adam Warren, Robert DeJesus, 'Kondom', all the usual good stuff.

OCT 6-8 ROBOCON 10, PO Box 3206, Anaheim, CA 92803, USA. Guests: Carl Macek, Ulpio Minucci (composer) Arlon Ober (orchestrator) and more Robotech guests; tenth anniversary celebration, art show, videos, dealers, games, trivia & costume contest, etc..

OCT 27-29 ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA, PO Box 13544, Atlanta, GA 30324-0544, USA. email gwatters@crl.com. Guests Vaughan Simmons, Bruce Lewis, lots more. NOV 10-12 ANIMEast, Radium Dynamix, 1544 Irving Street, Suite #201, Rahway, NJ 07065, USA. Guests Hiroyuki Kitazume, Mio, Monkey Punch, art show, dealers, masquerade, video, live concert by

Mio, Tezuka Awards.

1996 MAR 2 - FANIME CON 96, PO Box 642028, San Jose, CA 95164-2028, USA, email abunai@IBM.NET, no further details as yet.

1996 MAY 31-JUN 2 PROJECT A-KON 7, 3352 Broadway, Ste. 470, Garland, TX 75043, USA, email phoenix@pic.net. Guests Ben Dunn, Tavisha Wolgarth, Rosearik Rikki, Neil Nadelman and more.

FANZINES IN FOCUS

ANIME UK lists as many fanzines as space permits and reviews some - but unless you send us a copy, we can't review it! We can read French, some Italian and a little German and Japanese, and we're fluent in American and can handle a few phrases of Spanish, so get those zines rolling in from all over the world!

First, a response to some of the many queries we've had - yes, the next issue of ANIMACE is in preparation, now under the editorship of Mel Hyland, and yes, the next CAJUN SUSHI helping is scheduled for release at ReconTanimeTed. If you want any more info you'll have to ask the editors!

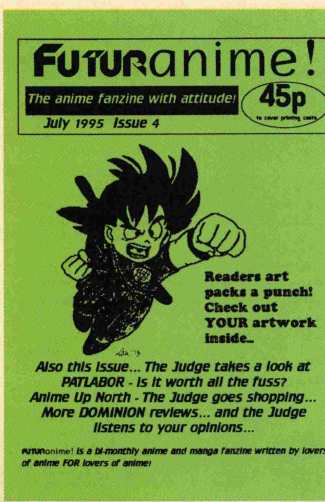
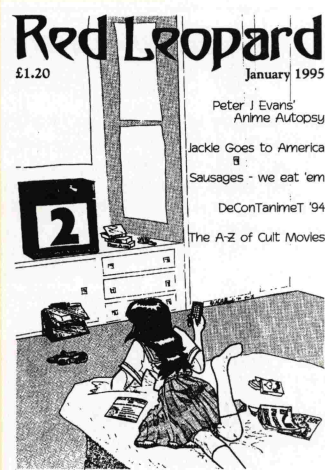
A new issue of Peter Cullen's innov-

ative RED LEOPARD reached us just after we got back from the States. 'New' is relative since the cover date was January 95 but if you don't have a copy yet you've still got time to send £1.20 plus p&p (30p UK) to Peter at 329 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Berks., RG11 3JT, UK. Peter J. Evans writes about anime, Paul lampshire writes fanfic, Pete & Harry write about sausages (note the credit to Tesco's deli counter) and DCon and fanzines are reviewed. Quirky, lotsa charm and NOT just a succession of video reviews printed to ensure the editor keeps getting freebie tapes.

FUTURANIME! (which used to be JUDGE ZONE) continues to be the cheapest zine to hit our offices at 45p (inc. UK P & P) for each 16-20 page bimonthly issue. Great on current fan activity and encouraging contribution and participation, the Judge is never backward in coming forward with an opinion or afraid to say what he thinks, resulting in a zine that's a surprising, but rather nice, blend of militancy and cosiness. Get it from editor Keith Elcombe c/o 13 Saxon Court, Kingsway Gardens, Andover, Hants., SP10 4BU, UK.

RETAIL ROUNDUP

This is the place to look for details of shops, mail order suppliers and other commercial sources for anime and manga goodies. If you have a favourite local shop or find a new anime/manga retailer, write to us with the details (and, if you can, a photo of the shop) so that other fans can shop there too! We'll list any legal trader, anywhere in the world, space permitting. This issue's featured slice of heaven is YAOHAN PLAZA at 399 Edgware Road, Colindale, London NW9. The largest Oriental shopping mall in Europe, Yaohan Plaza is part of a chain with branches all over the world - including several in America. The British branch unfortunately lacks a Pony Toy-Go-Round stuffed to the ceiling with robots and kaiju toys, but it does have a supermarket where you can buy SAILOR MOON and DRAGONBALL sweets and foods, Japanese beer and Meiji chocolate, a food hall where you can sample the delights of Japanese fast food and the less adventurous can get Chinese or Italian, a Segadrome full of coin-op games, and Books Asahiya, mecca for manga browsers and magazine buyers as well as those with £56 to drop on a hardback compendium of Godzilla toys photographed in glorious colour. You can easily spend a whole day there, not to mention a small fortune. Colindale on the Northern Line is the nearest Underground station and there's also a used manga store on the corner opposite the mall.



JAPANESE CONTACTS

You'll have seen us mention that fine Japanese fanzine AIDE SHINBUN, which circulates between 10 and 20,000 copies. The editors, Yasuhiro and Machiko Nakamura, have kindly agreed to publish British fan letters, notices and announcements exactly as they do for Japanese fans. This service will enable you to contact Japanese fans directly, and it is completely free. All you have to do is set out your announcement - fanzine ad, club meeting, convention notice, swap request or penpal request - very clearly, so that it is easy to read, in a space 57 mm tall by 80 mm wide. It must be in black and white, and you can include any artwork, logo or design if you wish. You can write in English or Japanese, and please state which language/s you prefer to correspond in. It isn't possible to accept bigger announcements or those set out in another format, because of the number of fans wanting to have their announcements printed. Send them to us at ANIME UK and we will send them on to AIDE SHINBUN. They will be printed as soon as space is available. You can also get a copy of the issue in which your letter appears, by sending three International Reply Coupons with your name and address. This is a wonderful opportunity to get your fanzine, club, or request to the attention of Japanese fans and all of us on Team AUK are very grateful to our friends at AIDE SHINBUN for this chance.



Sample AIDE SHINBUN ads (not to size)

MIND BREAK



Another quiz to tax your brain and test your anime knowledge. NEO-OTAKU questions are based on material currently available in the UK and USA, so they shouldn't give you too much trouble, but the higher levels may present more of a challenge. Answers next issue!

NEO-OTAKU

1. Name the series based on Japanese sentai show ZYURANGER.
2. How many episodes of LEGEND OF THE FOUR KINGS are there?
3. Name two of the four Knight Sabers - full names, please!
4. Which US video label releases RANMA 1/2?

OTAKU

1. Who is the artist responsible for the SILENT MOBIUS manga?
2. Which manga artist created the charas for CHRONO TRIGGER?
3. Give the full name of the 'irresponsible Captain'.
4. What was the name given to the YAMATO in the US edited version, STAR BLAZERS?

SUPER-OTAKU

1. Name all four members of CLAMP.
2. Which seminal US anime zine was edited by Robert Fenelon?
3. What connects SAILOR MOON and ULYSSES 31?
4. What was Yoshiaki Kawajiri's first film as a director?

Here are the long-awaited answers to last month's questions :

NEO-OTAKU :

1. Skuld, 2. Raiden Hacker Peace
3. Takaaki Ishiyama, 4. Sinda Nichols

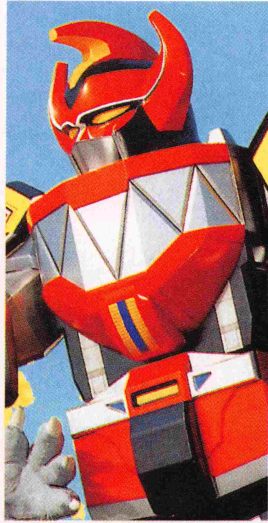
OTAKU :

1. FIST OF THE NORTH STAR, 1992,
2. A.D.VISION, 3. Condor, 4. Rastel

SUPER-OTAKU :

1. ANIMEJIN, 2. Mutsumi Inomata, chara designer on both, 3. Yoshiki Takaya, 4. Mari Iijima.

Neo-Otaku: 1



Neo-Otaku: 4



Otaku: 1



Super-Otaku: 1



JULIA McPAKE,

77 Oakwood Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2JG, UK : 'Hi! I'm looking for an English-speaking penpal between the ages of 14 and 16 from Japan, with whom I can exchange letters on a variety of subjects including, of course, manga and anime. My favourite anime is AKIRA. I'm also interested in a variety of other subjects, especially Occultism and the Supernatural. I look forward to hearing from you!'

GIANLUCA BETTI,

Localita Maracci 4, 55060 Monsgrati (LU), ITALY : 'Hello! I'm a 20 year old otaku boy from Italy and I'd like to correspond with penpals (boys & girls) from all over the world. Fave anime/manga include RECORD OF LODOSS WAR, URUSEI YATSURA, TENCHI MUYO!, RANMA 1/2 and many others. I also have a big VHS PAL and NTSC video collection in Italian, Japanese and English. Don't wait any longer and write to me : all letters welcome!'

LYNNE MATHESON,

52 Elms Vale Road, Dover, Kent, CT17 9NY, UK : 'Hi! I would like penpals from anywhere but especially Japan. I like drawing, mostly manga characters. I have LENSMAN, AKIRA, ZEGUY, TANK POLICE 5, and have just started to collect the GUYVER series. I look forward to hearing from you.'

DAVID AMOS,

Tomolow, Dunphail, Forres, MORAY, IV36 0QH, Scotland : '17 years old and into Dominion Tank Police, fantasy drawing, Red Dwarf and Rave. I would like to hear from any Swedish females that are into Sci-Fi. A reply to every letter will be made more than possible.'

MATTHEW NELSON,

10 Stucton Grove, Illingworth, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX2 9EE, UK : '16 year old boy seeking big or little male or female OTAKU. Hobbies : anime, manga, modelmaking, anime soundtracks and drawing.'

Fave anime : MACROSS, GUNBUSTER, LAPUTA, NAUSICAA, DOMINION. Fave manga : NAUSICAA GUNSMITH CATS, DOMU, X1999, ORION. I will reply to every letter, 100% guarantee!'

CASSANDRA (Sandra) BARTLETT,

37 Fairchild Close, Wye Street, London SW11 2SU, England : 'Hi! I'm 25 years old, deaf black woman. I've been an anime/manga fan for 3-5 years! I love anime, reading manga & also Japanese books in English and other adult cartoon books, horror and comedy. I want to learn Japanese sign language with an English wordbook. I hope to find a deaf or partially hearing penpal, male or female, from Tokyo, Japan. Also looking for info on manga/anime shops with overseas mail order services. I can't find a manga called ANGEL here. I hope you can help me. I hope I will hear from someone soon!'

KENNETH GAWNE,

28 Rhanbuoy Park, Craigavad, Holywood, BT18 0DX, Northern Ireland : 'I'm looking for a penpal between the ages of 10 and 13. My hobbies : ANIME UK, swimming, martial arts, watching anime & manga videos; faves are ROBOT-ECH, SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS and MACROSS PLUS.'

RAYMOND WHELAN,

31 Childers Estate, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Ireland : 'Hi, I'm 13 and I'd like a penpal from anywhere. I love MACROSS PLUS, AKIRA, DOMINION, GUYVER, VENUS WARS and BUBBLEGUM CRISIS. I hope you write!!'

DARREN MOLONEY,

13 Abbey Court, Ballykeeg, Limerick, Ireland : 'Irish boy, 13, seeks boy or girl anywhere in the world, especially Japan, who are into anime series such as GUNBUSTER, USHIO & TORA, BUBBLEGUM CRISIS and RANMA 1/2. I promise to reply! Write now!'

PEN PALS

LIVE & KICKING

Jim McLennan

Heroic Trio

(Made in Hong Kong, £13.99)

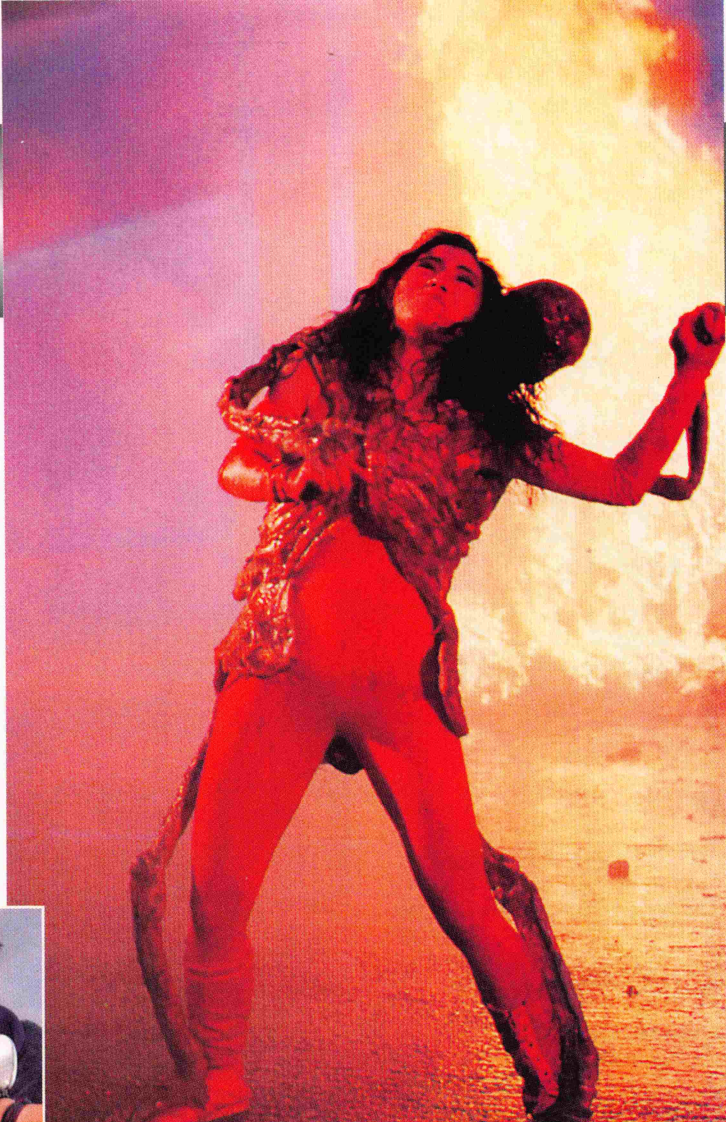
In addition to more-or-less direct conversions from anime shows, such as Dragonball, the Hong Kong film industry is also the undoubted master at capturing the energy and inventiveness seen in Japanese animation. Movies like "Saviour of the Soul" are unlike anything coming out of Hollywood, and "Heroic Trio" is very much of the same mould, combining action, melodrama and larger-than-life characters.

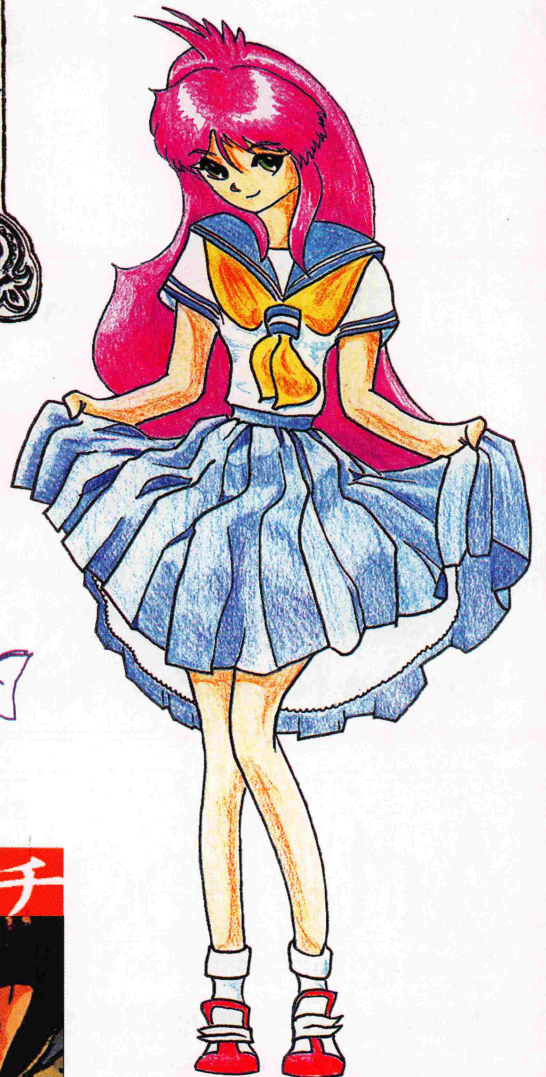
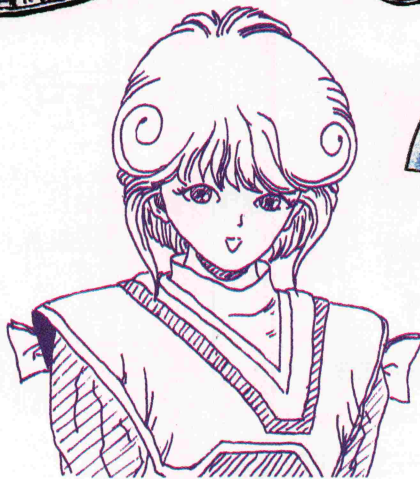
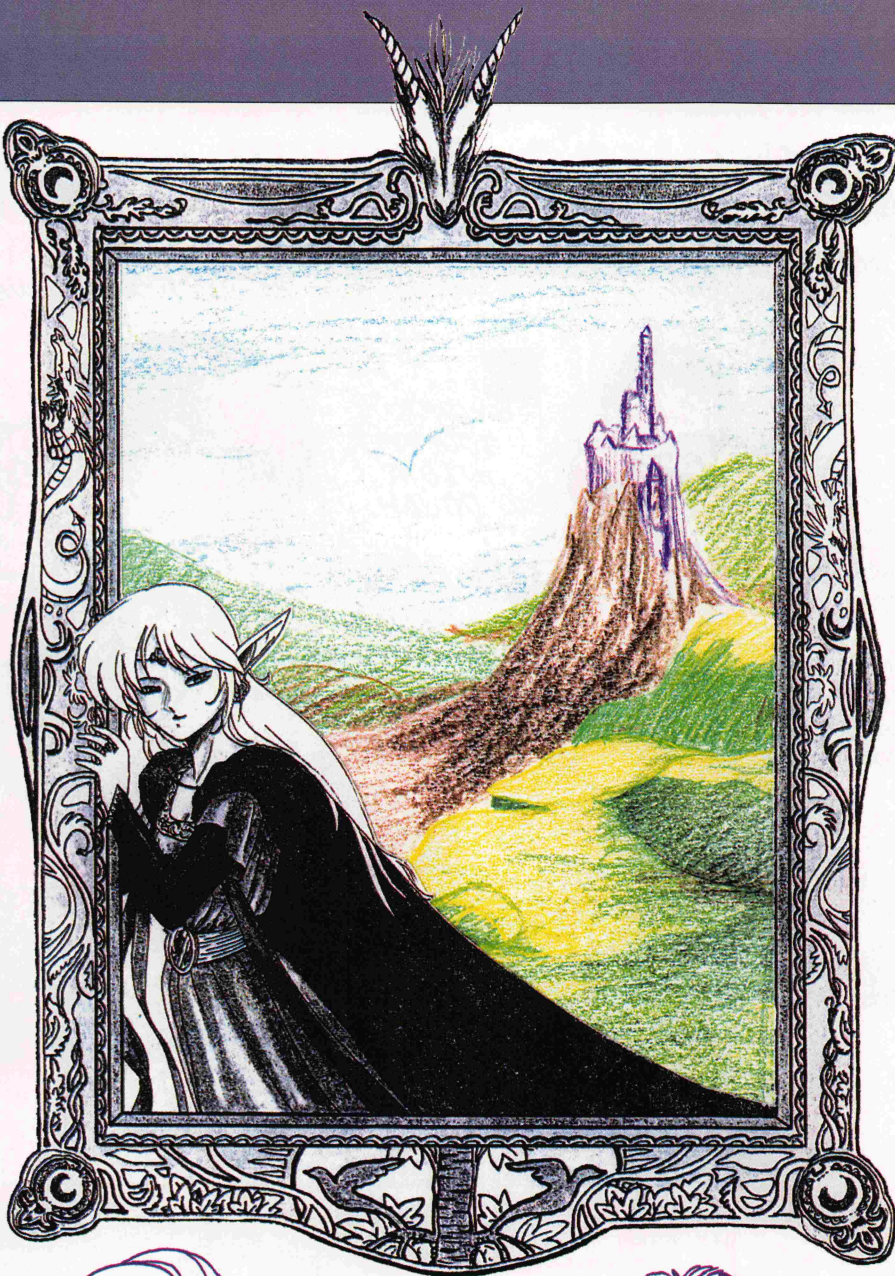
The main strengths of the film are the titular heroines. Anita Mui, Michelle Yeoh (aka Michelle Khan) and Maggie Cheung are among the biggest actresses in Hong Kong, so this is the equivalent of a film starring Julia Roberts, Meg Ryan and Sigourney Weaver (I leave it to you to work out who's who!). All three are absolutely faultless comic-book creations: Mui plays Tung, who is not only the wife of a policeman, but also works as a masked force for good, and Cheung is Chat, a motor-cycling bounty huntress with a fondness for the flamboyant. They are both trying to catch the person who is kidnapping babies from the local hospital; without giving anything away, it is actually former close friend Ching (Yeoh), forced into action by her evil master, who feeds the babies on human flesh and turns them into his private army.

The first few minutes make uncomfortable viewing, with wobbly superheroics more inclined to provoke sniggers than amazement. However, by the end of the experience - and "experience" is the only word to describe this movie - you'll swallow anything put up on the screen, up to and including the merciless termination of small children. Even purely seen as a setting for spectacular sequences, there's no doubt the movie delivers, with superb stunts co-ordinated by Ching Siu Tung, director of "A Chinese Ghost Story". Yet the film is more than this, with scenes that stuck in my mind after the fire and fury became a seamless blur. Often, these are moments of extreme emotion, which may not be to everyone's taste, especially newcomers to the genre. However, director Johnny To deserves respect, because it's hard to think

of any Western film-maker who would take an action film and push the dramatic boat out so far.

Oddly, it wasn't a massive hit in Hong Kong, missing the bandwagon for fantasy adventure. However, it proved a major success in other markets, so much so that a sequel, "Executioners", was made. The second film is much darker, and is in part an allegory for what might happen in the colony after 1997. Part one has no such pretensions, and is simply one of the best examples of new-wave Hong Kong fantasy cinema, providing excellent entertainment all round.





Top left: Deedlit by **CHANTAL NGUYEN**

Top right: Ranma, P-Chan & Gemma by **TIM LEAH**

Bottom Centre:

Video Girl Ai Amano by **DOUGLAS HUDSON**

Bottom right: "Isn't it pretty?" Catgirl Nuku Nuku

by **KEITH McDOWELL**

Bottom Left: Beldandy by **GEIR FRIESTAD**

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eyecatch

あ おいしい! * KYOKO'S CITRUS CRISPS

* Ah, Oishii! (Ah, Delicious!)

INGREDIENTS: *125G BUTTER *50G CASTER SUGAR
*150G SELF-RAISING FLOUR *GRATED RIND OF ONE ORANGE, ONE LEMON OR TWO LIMES.

1 RUB THE BUTTER INTO OTHER INGREDIENTS UNTIL THE MIXTURE RESEMBLES FINE BREADCRUMBS.

3 ROLL INTO SMALL BALLS ABOUT ONE INCH IN DIAMETER.

5 BAKE ABOVE CENTRE OF OVEN 350F, 180C, GAS 4, FOR 10-12 MINUTES UNTIL PALE GOLDEN.

2 WORK TOGETHER INTO A DOUGH.

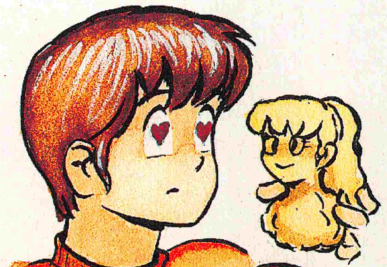
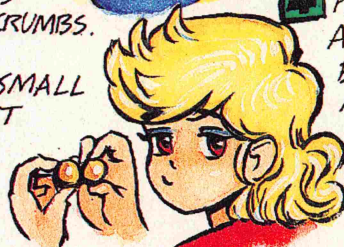
4 PLACE ON A GREASED BAKING SHEET ABOUT TWO INCHES APART AND FLATTEN.

6 COOL ON A WIRE RACK AND ENJOY! MAKES ABOUT 20.



ILLUSTRATED BY PHIL LASHLEY

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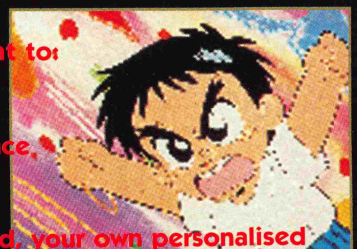
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